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Vol. C.



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THE
WORKS
OF
WALTER SCOTT, Esq.

—
VOL. CV.



LIFE OF NAPOLEON, Vol. 3.

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ZWICKAU,  
PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN.  
1827.



THE

W O R K S

WALTER SCOTT, F.R.S.



LIFE OF WALTER SCOTT, F.R.S.

BY

W. M. G. S.

PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCOTLAND

1852



THE  
L I F E  
OF  
NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE,  
EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH.

WITH A  
PRELIMINARY VIEW OF THE FRENCH  
REVOLUTION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF „WAVERLEY,” etc.

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VOL. III.

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ZWICKAU,

PRINTED FOR BROTHERS SCHUMANN.

1827.



— — — Sed non in Cæsare tantum  
Nomen erat, nec fama ducis; sed nescia virtus  
Stare loco: solusque pudor non vincere bello.  
Acer et indomitus; quo spes quoque ira vocasset,  
Ferre manum, et nunquam temerando parcere ferro:  
Successus urgere suos: instare favori  
Numinis: impellens quicquid sibi summa petenti  
Obstaret: gaudensque viam fecisse ruina.

LUCANI *Pharsalia*, Lib. I.



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L I F E

OF

N A P O L E O N B U O N A P A R T E .

CHAPTER XIII.

VIEW OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Indecision of the Girondists, and its Effects. — The Royal Family in the Temple. — Insulted by the Agents of the Community, both within and without the Prison — Their exemplary Patience. — The King deprived of his Son's Society. — Buzot's Admission of the general dislike of France to a Republican Form of Government. — The King brought to Trial before the Convention — His first Examination — Carried back to Prison amidst Insult and Abuse. — Tumult in the Assembly. — The King deprived of Intercourse with his Family. — Malesherbes appointed as Counsel to defend the King — and De Seze. — Louis again brought before the Convention — Opening Speech of De Seze — King remanded to the Temple. — Stormy Debate in the

Convention. — Eloquent Attack of Vergniaud on the Jacobins. — Sentence of DEATH pronounced against the King — General Sympathy for his Fate. — Dumouriez arrives in Paris — Vainly tries to avert the King's Fate. — LOUIS XVI. BEHEADED ON 21ST JANUARY 1793 — MARIE ANTOINETTE on the 16th October thereafter — The Princesse ELISABETH in May 1794 — The Dauphin Perishes, by Cruelty, June 8th, 1795. — The Princess Royal exchanged for La Fayette, 19th December 1795.

WE have already said, that the vigorous and masculine, as well as virtuous exhortations of Madame Roland, were thrown away upon her colleagues, whose fears were more than female. The Girondists could not be made to perceive, that, though their ferocious adversaries were feared through France, yet they were also hated. The moral feeling of all Frenchmen who had any left, detested the authors of a long train of the most cold-blooded murders; the suspicions of all men of property were attached to the conduct of a party, whose leaders rose from indigence to affluence by fines, confiscations, sequestrations, besides every other kind of plunder, direct and indirect. If the majority of the Con-

vention had adopted the determination of boldly resisting their unprincipled tyrants, and preventing, at whatever hazard, the murder of the King, the strength of the country would probably have supported a constituted authority against the usurpations of the Community of Paris, which had no better title to tyrannize over the Convention, and by so doing to govern France at pleasure, than had the council of the meanest town in the kingdom.

The Girondists ought to have been sensible, that, even by thwarting this favourite measure, they could not increase the hatred which the Jacobins already entertained against them, and should have known that further delay to give open battle, would not be received as an overture of friendship, but be regarded as a timid indecision, which must have heated their enemies, in proportion as it cooled their friends. The truckling, time-serving policy which they observed on this occasion, deprived the Girondists of almost all chance of forming a solid and substantial interest in the country. By a bold, open, and manly defence of the King, they would have done honour to themselves as public men, willing to discharge their duty at the risk of their lives. They would have been sure of whatever number could be gathered, either of royalists, who were beginning to raise a head in

Bretagne and La Vendée, or of Constitutionals, who feared the persecution of the Jacobins. The materials were already kindled for those insurrections, which afterwards broke out at Lyons, Marseilles, Toulon, and generally through the south and west of France. They might have brought up five or six thousand Federates from the departments, and the force would then have been in their hands. They might, by showing a bold and animated front, have regained possession of the National Guard, which was only prevented by a Jacobin commander and his staff officers, as well as by their timidity, from throwing off a yoke so bloody and odious as that which they were groaning under. But to dare this, it was necessary that they should have the encouragement of the Convention; and that body, managed as it was by the Girondists, showed a timorous unwillingness to support the measures of the Jacobins, which implied their dislike indeed, but also evinced their fear.

Meantime the King, with the Queen, his sister, and their children, the Dauphin and the Princess Royal, remained in the Tower of the Temple, more uncomfortably lodged, and much more harshly treated, than state prisoners before the Revolution had been in the execrable Bastille. *)

*) The reader may compare the account which

The royal prisoners were under the especial charge of the Community of Paris, who, partly from their gross ignorance, partly from their desire to display their furious Jacobinical zeal, did all in their power to embitter their captivity.

Pethion, whose presence brought with it so many cruel recollections, studiously insulted him by his visits to the prison. The municipal officers sent thither to ensure the custody of the King's person, and to be spies upon his private conversation, were selected among the worst and most malignant Jacobins. His efforts and equanimity, and even civility, towards these brutal jailors, were answered with the most gross insolence. One of them, a mason, in his working dress, had thrown himself into an arm-chair, where, decorated with his municipal scarf, he reposed at his ease. The King condescended to ask him, by way of conversation, where he wrought. He answered gruffly, "at the Church of Saint Genevieve." — "I remember," said the King, "I laid the foundation stone — a fine edifice; but I have heard the foundation is insecure." — "It is more sure," answered the fel-

Marmontel gives of his residence in the Bastille, with the faithful Clery's narrative of Louis's captivity in the Temple.

low, "than the thrones of tyrants." The King smiled and was silent. He endured with the same patience the insolent answer of another of these officials. The man not having been relieved at the usual and regular hour, the King civilly expressed his hopes that he would find no inconvenience from the delay. "I am come here," answered the ruffian, "to watch your conduct, not for you to trouble yourself with mine. No one," he added, fixing his hat firm on his brow, "least of all you, have any business to concern themselves with it." We have seen prisons, and are sure that even the steeled jailor, accustomed as he is to scenes of distress, is not in the habit, unprovoked and wantonly, of answering with reproach and insult such ordinary expressions of civility, when offered by the worst criminals. The hearts of these men, who, by chance as it were, became dungeon-keepers, and whose first captive had been many years their King, must have been as hard as the nether mill-stone.

While such scenes occurred within the prison, those who kept watch without, either as sentinels or as patrols of the Jacobins, (who maintained stern vigilance in the environs of the prison,) were equally ready to contribute their share of vexation and insult. Pictures and placards, representing the royal family under the hands of the executioner, were pasted up where

the King and Queen might see them. The most violent patriotic songs, turning upon the approaching death of Monsieur and Madame Veto, were sung below their windows, and the most frightful cries for their blood disturbed such rest as prisoners can obtain. The head of the Princess of Lamballe was brought under their window on the 3d September, and one of the municipal officers would have enticed the royal family to the window that they might see this ghastly spectacle, had not the other, "of milder mood," prevented them from complying. When questioned concerning the names of these two functionaries by some less savage persons, who wished to punish the offending ruffian, Louis would only mention that of the more humane of the two; so little was this unhappy prince addicted to seek revenge, even for the most studied cruelties practised against him.

The conduct of the Community increased in rigour, as the process against Louis seemed to draw nearer. The most ordinary points of personal accommodation were made subjects of debate ere they could be granted, and that upon the King's being permitted to shave himself, lasted a long while. Every article was taken from him, even to his tooth-pick and penknife, and the Queen and princesses were deprived of their scissors and housewives. This led to a touching

remark of Louis. He saw his sister, while at work, obliged to bite asunder a thread which she had no means of cutting, and the words escaped him, "Ah! you wanted nothing in your pretty house at Montreuil." — "Dearest brother," answered the princess, whose character was that of sanctity, purity of thought, and benevolence, "can I complain of anything, since Heaven has preserved me to share and to comfort, in some degree, your hours of captivity?" It was, indeed, in the society of his family that the character of Louis shone to the greatest advantage; and if, when on the throne, he did not always possess the energies demanded of his high situation, in the dungeon of the Temple misfortune threw around him the glories of a martyr. His morning hours were spent in instructing or amusing the young Dauphin, a task for which the King's extensive information well qualified him. The captives enjoyed, as they best might, a short interval, when they were permitted to walk in the gardens of the Temple, sure to be insulted (like Charles I. in the same situation) by the sentinels, who puffed volumes of tobacco-smoke in their faces as they passed them, while others annoyed the ears of the ladies with licentious songs, or the most cruel denunciations.

All this Louis and his family endured with such sainted patience, that several who obtained

access to his person were moved by the spectacle of royalty reduced to a situation so melancholy, yet sustained with such gentleness and fortitude. Some of the municipal officers themselves became melted, and changed their ideas of the King, when they beheld him in so new and singular a light.

Stories of the insults which he daily received, and of the meekness with which he sustained them, began to circulate among the citizens of the higher classes; and, joined to their fear of falling completely under the authority of the sans culottes, led many of the Republicans to cast back their thoughts to the Constitution of 1791, with all its faults, and with its monarchical executive government.

The more wise and sensible of the Girondists began to suspect that they had been too hasty in erecting their favourite Republic, on ground incapable of affording a sound and secure foundation for such an edifice. Buzot gives testimony to this, dated later, no doubt, than the period we are treating of; but the grounds of the reasoning existed as much at the King's trial as after the expulsion of the Girondists. The passage is remarkable. "My friends," says this distinguished Girondist, "preserved a long time the hopes of establishing a republic in France, even when all seemed to demonstrate that the enlight-

ened classes, whether from prejudice or from just reasoning, felt indisposed to that form of government. That hope did not forsake my friends when the most wicked and vilest of men obtained possession of the minds of the inferior classes, and corrupted them by the opportunities they offered of license and pillage. My friends reckoned on the lightness and aptitude to change proper to the French character, and which they considered to be peculiarly suitable to a republican nation. I have always considered that conclusion as entirely false, and have repeatedly in my heart despaired of my darling wish to establish a republic in my country." In another place he says, "It must not be dissembled that the majority of Frenchmen earnestly desired royalty, and the constitution of 1791. In Paris, the wish was general, and was expressed most freely, though only in confidential society, and among private friends. There were only a few noble and elevated minds who felt themselves worthy to be Republicans, and whom the example of the Americans had encouraged to essay the project of a similar government in France, the country of frivolity and mutability. The rest of the nation, with the exception of the ignorant wretches, without either sense or substance, who vomited abuse against royalty, as at another time they would have done against a

commonwealth, and all without knowing why, — the rest of the nation were all attached to the constitution of 1791, and looked on the pure Republicans as a very well-meaning kind of madmen.”

In these lines, written by one of the most sincere of their number, we read the condemnation of the Girondists, who, to adventure the precarious experiment of a republic, in which they themselves saw so many difficulties, were contented to lend their arms and countenance to the destruction of that very government, which they knew to be desired by all the enlightened classes of France except themselves, and which demolition only made room for the dreadful triumvirate, — Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.

But we also see, from this and other passages, that there existed feelings, both in Paris and in the departments, which, if the Convention had made a manly appeal to them, might have saved the King's life, and prevented the Reign of Terror. There began to arise more obvious signs of disaffection to the rulers, and of interest in the King's fate. These were increased when he was brought before the Convention for examination, an occasion upon which Louis was treated with the same marked appearance of premeditated insult, which had been offered to him when in his dungeon. He had as yet been allowed to enjoy

the society of his son, though his intercourse with the other members of the family had been much abridged. He was passionately attached to this unhappy son, who answered his affection, and showed early token of talents which were doomed never to blossom. It was the cruel resolution of his jailors to take the boy from his father on the very morning *) when Louis was to undergo an interrogatory before the Convention. In other words, to give the deepest blow to his feelings, at the very moment when it was necessary he should combine his whole mental powers for defending his life against his subtle and powerful enemies.

This cruel measure produced in some respect the effect desired. The King testified more deep affliction than he had yet manifested. The child was playing at the game called Siam with his father, and by no effort could the Dauphin get beyond the number *sixteen*. "That is a very unlucky number," said the child. "True, indeed, my child. I have long had reason to think so, my son," answered the King. This petty omen seemed soon accomplished by the commissioners of the Assembly, who, without deigning further explanation than that Louis must prepare to re-

*) 11th December.

ceive the Mayor of Paris, tore the child from his father, and left him to his sorrow. In about two hours, during which the trampling of many horses was heard, and a formidable body of troops with artillery were drawn up around the prison, the mayor appeared, a man called Chambon, weak and illiterate, the willing tool of the ferocious Community in which he presided. He read to the King the decree of the Convention, that Louis Capet should be brought to their bar. "Capet," answered Louis, "is not my name — it was that of one of my ancestors. I could have wished that I had not been deprived of the society of my son during the two hours I have expected you — but it is only of a piece with the usage I have experienced for four months. I will attend you to the Convention, not as acknowledging their right to summon me, but because I yield to the superior power of my enemies."

The crowd pressed much on the King during the passage from the Temple to the Tuileries, where the Convention had now established their sittings, as men who had slain and taken possession. Loud cries were heard, demanding the life of the tyrant; yet Louis preserved the most perfect composure, even when he found himself standing as a criminal before an assembly of his native subjects, born most of them in a rank

which excluded them from judicial offices, till he himself had granted the privilege.

“Louis,” said the President, (the versatile, timorous, but subtle Barrere,) “you may be seated.” The King sat down accordingly, and listened without apparent emotion to a long act of accusation, in which every accident that had arisen out of the Revolution was gravely charged as a point of indictment against the King. He replied by short laconic answers, which evinced great presence of mind and composure, and alleged the decrees of the National Assembly as authority for the affair of Nancy, and the firing on the people in the Champ-de-Mars, both of which were urged against him as aggressions on the people. One or two replies we cannot omit inserting.

“You are accused,” said the President, “of having authorized money to be distributed to poor unknowns in the suburb of Saint Antoine. What have you to reply?” — “That I know no greater pleasure,” answered Louis, “than in giving assistance to the needy.” — “You held a review of the Swiss at five o’clock in the morning of the 10th of August.” — “I did,” replied the King, “review the troops that were about my person. It was in presence of the constituted authorities, the department, and the Mayor of Paris — I had sent in vain to request from the

Convention a deputation of its members, and I came with my family to place myself in their hands." — "Why did you double the strength of the Swiss Guards at that time?" demanded the President. — "It was done with the knowledge of all the constituted authorities," said the King, in a tone of perfect composure; "I was myself a constituted authority, I have a right to defend my office." — "You have caused," said the President, "the blood of Frenchmen to be shed. What have you to reply?" — "It was not *I* who caused it," answered Louis, speaking with more emphasis than he had before used.

The King was carried back to his prison, amid threats and abuse from the same banditti whose ranks he had before traversed.

In replying to the articles alleged against him, Louis had followed a different course from Charles, who refused to plead before the tribunal at which he was arraigned. The latter acted with the high spirit of a prince, unwilling to derogate from the honour of the crown he had worn; the former, as a man of honour and probity, was desirous of defending his character wherever it should be attacked, without stopping to question the authority of the court which was met to try him.

A great tumult followed in the Assembly the moment when the King had withdrawn from the

Hall. The Jacobins became sensible that the scene which had just passed had deeply affected many of the neutral party, and was not unlikely to influence their final votes. They demanded an instant decree of condemnation, and that in the name of the oppressed people. "You who have heard the tyrant," said Billaud de Varennes, "ought in justice to hear the people whom he has oppressed." The Convention knew well what was meant by the appearance of the people at the bar, and while they trembled at this threat, Duhem made a motion that the King should be executed that very night. The majority, however, retained too much sense of shame to permit themselves to be hurried farther that evening. They indulged the King with the selection of counsel to defend him.

The monarch, on returning to his prison, had found he was doomed to solitary confinement. All intercourse with his family was denied him. He wept, but neither wife, sister, nor child, was permitted to share his tears. It was for the fate of his son that he showed the deepest interest. Yet, anxious as his apprehensions were, they could not reach the extremities to which the child was reduced. The heart of man could not have imagined the cruelty of his lot.

Louis chose for his counsel two lawyers of celebrity, carefully selecting such as he thought

would incur least risk of danger by the task imposed. One of these, Tronchet, was too sensible to the honour of his profession to hesitate a moment in accepting the perilous office; but the other, Target, refused to undertake it. The phrase used by this unworthy jurisconsult seemed to involve the King's condemnation. "A free republican," he said, "ought not to undertake functions of which he feels himself incapable." Timid as the Convention was, this excuse was heard with disapprobation. It was declaring that the defence of the King was untenable by any friend of the present system.

Several persons offered their services with voluntary devotion, but the preference was claimed by Lamoignon Malesherbes, who, twice called by Louis to be a member of his council, when the office was the object of general ambition, alleged his right to a similar function, when others might reckon it dangerous. This burst of honourable self-devotion awakened a sentiment of honour in the Convention, which, could it have lasted, might have even yet prevented a great national crime.

Paris began to show symptoms of returning interest in the person of Louis. The oft-repeated calumnies against him seemed to lose their influence on all but the ignorant multitude, and hired bandits. The honest devotion of Males-

herbes, whose character was known through the nation as a man of talent, honour, and probity, reflected a forcible light on that of his royal client, who had, in the hour of need, found such a defender. De Seze, an excellent lawyer, was afterwards added to the King's band of counsel; but the King gained little more by this indulgence, excepting the consolation of communicating with such men as Malesherbes and his two associates, at a time when no other friend was suffered to approach him, excepting the faithful Clery, his valet-de-chambre. *)

The lawyers entertained some hopes, and, in the spirit of their profession, exulted when they saw how facts contradicted the charges of the prosecutors. "Moderate your satisfaction, my friends," said Louis; "all these favourable circumstances are well known to the gentlemen of the Convention, and if they considered them as

*) Clery we have seen and known, and the form and manners of that model of pristine faith and loyalty can never be forgotten. Gentlemanlike and complaisant in his manners, his deep gravity and melancholy features announced, that the sad scenes in which he had acted a part so honourable, were never for a moment out of his memory.

entitled to weight in my favour, I should not be in this difficulty. You take, I fear, a fruitless task in hand, but let us perform it as a last duty." When the term of his second appearance at the Convention arrived, he expressed anxiety at the thoughts of appearing before them with his beard and hair overgrown, owing to his being deprived of razors and scissors. "Were it not better your Majesty went as you are at present," said the faithful Clery, "that all men may see the usage you have received?" — "It does not become me," answered the King, "to seek to obtain pity." With the same spirit, he commanded his advocates to avoid all appeals to the passions or the feelings of the judges and audience, and to rest his defence exclusively upon logical deductions from the evidence produced.

When summoned to the Convention, Louis was compelled to wait for a time in the outer hall, where he walked about conversing with his counsel. A deputy who passed, heard Malesherbes during this intercourse use to his royal client the courtesies of *Sire* — *Your Majesty*. "What renders you so bold," he said, "that you utter these prohibited expressions?" — "Contempt of life," answered the generous Malesherbes.

De Seze opened his case with great ability.

He pleaded with animation the right which the King had to the character of inviolability, a right confirmed to him by the Legislative Assembly after the flight to Varennes, and which implied a complete indemnity for that crime, even supposing a journey from his capital in a post carriage, with a few attendants, could be deemed criminal. But he urged that, if the Convention did not respect his inviolability — if, in a word, they did not consider him as a King, he was then entitled to the formal securities provided for every citizen by the laws. He ridiculed the idea that, with a trifling force of Swiss, Louis could meditate any serious injury against the Convention. "He prepared," said De Seze, "for his defence, as you citizens would doubtless do, when you heard that an armed multitude were on their way to surprise you in your sanctuary." He closed an excellent pleading with an enumeration of the benefits which Louis had conferred on the French nation, and reminded them that their King had given them liberty so soon as they desired to be free. Louis himself said a few words with much firmness. He was remanded to the Temple, and a stormy debate commenced.

At first, the Jacobins attempted to carry all by a clamorous demand of the vote. Lanjuinais replied to them with unexpected spirit, charged

them with planning and instigating the assault on the 10th of August, and then with turning on the King the blame which justly lay with themselves alone. Dreadful outcries followed this true and intrepid speech. "Let the friends of the despot die with him!" was the general exclamation of the Jacobins; "to the Abbay — to the scaffold with the perjured deputy, who slanders the glorious 10th of August!" — "Be it so," answered Lanjuinais. "Better death, than the crime of pronouncing an unjust sentence."

The Girondists were too much themselves accessory to the attack on the Tuileries to follow this bold and manly line of defence, and Lanjuinais stood unsupported in his opinion.

Saint Just and Robespierre eagerly called for a doom of death. The former accused the King of a design to cheat the people out of their liberties by a pretended show of submission to their will, and an affected moderation in exercising his authority. On the 10th of August, (he had the effrontery to state this,) the King, entering the hall of the Convention with armed followers, (the small escort who had difficulty in protecting him through the armed crowd,) had violated the asylum of the laws. Besides, as he triumphantly concluded, was it for a people who had declared war against all the tyrants in the world, to sorrow for the fate of their own? Robespierre

openly disowned the application of legal forms, and written rubrics of law, to such a case as was before the Convention. The people who had asserted their own right in wresting the sceptre from the hands of Louis, had a right to punish him for having swayed it. He talked of the case being already decided by the unanimous voice and act of the people, from whom all legal authority emanated, and whose authority was paramount to that of the Convention, who were only their representatives.

Vergniaud, the most eloquent of the Girondists, found nothing better to propose, than that the case of Louis should be decided by an appeal to the nation. He alleged that the people, who, in solemn federation had sworn, in the Champ-de-Mars, to recognise the Constitution, had thereby sworn the inviolability of the King. This was truly said; but, such being the case, what right had the Convention to protect the King's trial by sending the case from before themselves to the people? If his inviolability had been formally admitted and sworn to by the nation, what had the Convention more to do than recognise the inviolability with which the nation had invested the monarch, and dismiss him from the bar accordingly?

The explanation lay here; that the eloquent orator was hampered and constrained in his

reasoning, by the difficulty of reconciling his own conduct, and that of his associates, to the principles which he was now willing to adopt as those that were just and legal. If the person of the King was indeed inviolable, what was to be thought of their consistency, who, by the means of their daring and devoted associates, Barbaroux and Rebecque, had actually brought up the force of Marseillois who led the van, and were, in fact, the efficient and almost the only means by which the palace of that inviolable sovereign was stormed, his guards slaughtered, his person committed to prison, and, finally, his life brought in danger? It was the obvious and personal answer arising out of their own previous manœuvres, the *argumentum ad hominem*, as it is called by logicians, which hung a padlock on the lips of the eloquent Vergniaud, while using the argument which, in itself most just and true, was irreconcilable with the revolutionary measures to which he had been an express party. "Do not evil, that good may come of it," is a lesson which may be learned, not indeed in the transcendental philosophy which authorizes the acting of instant and admitted wrong, with the view of obtaining some distant, hypothetical, and contingent good; but in the rules of Christian faith and true philosophy, which commands that each case be weighed on its own circumstances, and

decided upon the immutable rules of right or wrong, without admitting any subterfuge founded on the hope of remote contingencies and future consequences.

But Vergniaud's oratory was freed from these unhappy trammels, when, with the fervour of a poet, and the inspiration of a prophet, he declaimed against the faction of Jacobins, and announced the consequences of that sanguinary body's ascending to supreme power, by placing their first step on the body of Louis. The picture which he drew of the coming evil seemed too horrible for reality; and yet the scenes which followed even more than realized the predictions of the baffled republican, who saw too late and too clearly the tragic conclusion of the scenes, in which he had borne so active a part.

The appeal to the people, or to the nation, had been argued against by the Jacobin speakers, as opening the nearest road to civil war. Indeed it was one of the many objections to this intermediate and evasive plan, that the people of France, convened in their different bodies, were likely to come to very different conclusions on the King's impeachment. Where the Jacobin clubs were strong and numerous, they would have been sure, according to the maxim of their union, to use the compulsory but ready means of open violence, to disturb the freedom of

voting on this important question, and would thus have carried by forcible measures the vote of death. In departments in which Constitution-
alists and Royalists had strong interest, it was probable that force would have been repelled by force; and upon the whole, in France, where the law had been long a dead letter, the arbitrement of the nation on the King's fate must and would have proved a bloody one.

But from that picture which must have followed the success of his party on this memorable occasion, Vergniaud endeavoured to avert the thoughts of his hearers, while he strove to fix them on the crimes and criminal ambition of the Jacobins.

“It is *they* who wish civil war,” he exclaimed, “who threaten with daggers the National Convention of France — they who preach in the tribune, and in the market-place, doctrines subversive of all social order. *They* are the men who desire civil war, who accuse Justice of pusillanimity, because she will not strike before conviction — who call common humanity a proof of conspiracy, and accuse all those as traitors to their country who will not join in acts of robbery and assassination — those, in fine, who pervert every sentiment and principle of morality, and by the grossest flatteries en-

deavour to gain the popular assent and countenance to the most detestable crimes." He dissected the arts of the demagogues in terms equally just and severe. They had been artfully referred to the Temple as the cause of every distress under which the populace laboured; after the death of Louis, which they so eagerly pursued, they would have the same reasons and the same power for directing the odium of every distress or misfortune against the Convention, and making the representatives of France equally obnoxious to the people, as they had now rendered the dethroned King. He concluded with a horrible picture of Paris under the domination of Jacobinism, which was, however, exceeded by the facts that ensued. "To what horrors," he said, "will not Paris be delivered, when she becomes the prey of a horde of desperate assassins? Who will inhabit a city, where Death and Desolation will then fix their court? Who will console the ruined citizen, stripped of the wealth he has honourably acquired, or relieve the wants of his family, which his exertions can no longer supply? Go in that hour of need," he continued, "and ask bread of those who have precipitated you from competence into ruin, and they will answer, 'Hence! dispute with hungry hounds for the carcasses of those we have last murdered — or, if you would drink, here is the blood we

have lately shed — other nourishment we have none to afford you!’”

The eloquence of Vergniaud, and the exertions of his associates, were in vain. Barrere, the auxiliary of the Jacobins, though scarcely the partaker of their confidence, drew off as usual many of the timid host of neutrals, by alleging specious reasons, of which the convincing power lay in this, that they must consult their own safety rather than the cause of justice. The appeal to the people, on which the Girondists relied as the means of reprieving rather than saving the King — of giving their consciences the quieting opiate, that he died not by their direct agency — was rejected by four hundred and twenty voices against two hundred and eighty-one. A decisive appeal was made to the Convention on the question, to what punishment the dethroned monarch should be subjected.

The bravos of the Jacobins surrounded the place of meeting on every point of access while this final vote was called, and, to men already affrighted with their situation, added every motive of terror that words, and sometimes acts of violence, could convey. “Think not,” they said, “to rob the people of their prey. If you acquit Louis, we go instantly to the Temple to destroy him with his whole family, and we add to his massacre that of all who befriended him.”

Undoubtedly, among the terrified deputies, there were some moved by these horrible arguments, who conceived that, in giving a vote for Louis's life, they would endanger their own, without saving him. Still, however, among this overawed and trembling band of judges, there were many whose hearts failed them as they reflected on the crime they were about to commit, and who endeavoured to find some evasion stopping short of regicide. Captivity till the peace was in general proposed as a composition. The philosophic humanity of Condorcet threw in fetters, to make the condition more acceptable to the Jacobins. Others voted for death conditionally. The most intense anxiety prevailed during the vote; and even the banditti in the tribunes suspended their usual howls, and only murmured death to the voter, when the opinion given was for the more lenient punishment. When the Duke of Orleans, who had returned from England on the fall of La Fayette, and sat as a member of the Convention, under the absurd name of Citizen L'Egalité — when this base prince was asked his vote, there was a deep pause; and when the answer proved Death, a momentary horror electrified the auditors. *) When the

*) His own death, by the guillotine, in 1793,

voices were numbered, the direct doom was carried by a majority of fifty-three, being the difference between three hundred and thirty-four. The President announced that the doom of DEATH was pronounced against Louis Capet.

Let none, we repeat, dishonour the parallel passage in England's history, by comparing it with this disgraceful act of murder, committed by a few in rabid fury of gain, by the greater part in mere panic and cowardice. That deed, which Algernon Sidney pronounced the bravest and justest ever done in England, — that *facinus tam illustre* of Milton, — was acted by men, from whose principles and feelings we differ entirely; but not more than the ambition of Cromwell differed from that of the blood-thirsty and envious Robespierre, or the political views of Hutchinson and his associates, who acted all in honour, from those of the timid and pedantic Girondists.

In Paris there was a general feeling for the King's condition, and a wish that he might be saved; but never strong enough to arise into the

was hardly sufficient retribution for his fiendlike conduct on this afflicting occasion.

resolution to effect his safety. Dumouriez himself came to Paris with all the splendour of a conqueror, whose victory at Jemappes had added Belgium, as Flanders began to be called, to the French nation; and there can be no doubt, that whatever might be his ulterior design, which his situation and character render somewhat doubtful, his purpose was, in the first place, to secure the person of Louis from farther danger or insult. But conqueror as he was, Dumouriez, though more favourably placed than La Fayette had been upon a similar attempt, was far from being, with respect to Paris, in the same independent situation in which Cromwell had been to London, or Cæsar to Rome.

The army with which he had accomplished his victories was yet but half his own. Six Commissioners from the Convention, Danton himself being the principal, had carefully remained at his head-quarters, watching his motions, controlling his power, encouraging the private soldiers of each regiment to hold Jacobin clubs exclusive of the authority of the general, studiously placing in their recollection at every instant, that the doctrines of liberty and equality rendered the soldier to a certain point independent of his commander; and reminding them that they conquered by the command of Dumouriez, indeed, but under the auspices of the Republic,

to whom the general, as they themselves, was but a servant and factor. The more absolute the rule of a community, the more do its members enjoy any relaxation of such severe bonds; so that he who can with safety preach a decay of discipline to an army, of which discipline is the very essence, is sure to find willing listeners. A great part of Dumouriez's army was unsettled in their minds by doctrines, which taught an independence of official authority inconsistent with their situation as soldiers, but proper, they were assured, to their quality of citizens.

The manner in which Pache, the minister of war, who, brought into office by Roland, deserted his benefactor to join the Jacobin faction, had conducted his branch of the administration, was so negligent, that it had given ground for serious belief that it was his intention to cripple the resources of the armed force (at whatever risk of national defeat,) in such a manner, that if in their disorganised state Dumouriez had attempted to move them towards Paris for insuring the safety of Louis, he should find them unfit for such a march. The army had no longer draught-horses for the artillery, and was in want of all with which a regular body of forces should be supplied. Dumouriez, according to his own account, both from the want of equipments of every kind, and from the manner in

which the Jacobin Commissioners had enfeebled the discipline of his troops, could not have moved towards Paris without losing the command of the army, and his head to boot, before he had got beyond the frontiers of Belgium.

Dumouriez had detached, however, according to his own statement, a considerable number of officers and confidential persons, to second any enterprise which he might find himself capable of undertaking in the King's behalf. While at Paris, he states that he treated with every faction in turn, attempting even to move Robespierre; and through means of his own intimate friend Gensonné, he renewed his more natural connexions with the Girondists. But the one party were too determined on their bloody object to be diverted from it; the other, disconcerted in viewing the result of their timid and ambiguous attempt to carry through an appeal to the people, saw no further chance of saving the King's life otherwise than by the risk of their own, and chose rather to be executioners than victims.

Among the citizens of Paris, many of whom Dumouriez states himself to have urged with the argument, that the Convention, in assuming the power of judging the King, had exceeded the powers granted to them by the nation, he found hearers, not indeed uninterested or unmoved,

but too lukewarm to promise efficient assistance. The citizens were in that state, in which an English poet has said of them, —

“Cold burghers must be struck, and struck
like flints,
Ere their hid fire will sparkle.”

With the natural sense of right and justice, they perceived what was expected of them; but felt not the less the trammels of their situation, and hesitated to incur the fury of a popular insurrection, which passiveness on their own part might postpone or avert. They listened to the general with interest, but without enthusiasm; implored him to choose a less dangerous subject of conversation; and spoke of the power of the Jacobins, as of the influence of a tempest, which mortal efforts could not withstand. With one man of worth and confidence, Dumouriez pressed the conversation on the meanness of suffering the city to be governed by two or three thousand banditti, till the citizen looked on the ground and blushed, as he made the degrading confession, — “I see, citizen-general, to what conclusion your argument tends; but we are cowards, and the King **MUST** perish. What exertion of spirit can you expect from a city, which, having under arms eighty thousand well-trained militia,

suffered themselves, notwithstanding, to be domineered over and disarmed by a comparative handful of rascally Federates from Brest and Marseilles?" The hint was sufficient. Dumouriez, who was involved in much personal danger, desisted from efforts, in which he could only compromise his own safety without insuring that of the King. He affirms, that during twenty days' residence near Paris, he witnessed no effort, either public or private, to avert the King's fate; and that the only feelings which prevailed among the higher classes, were those of consternation and apathy.

It was then especially to be regretted, that an emigration, certainly premature, had drained the country of those fiery and gallant nobles, whose blood would have been so readily ventured in defence of the King. Five hundred men of high character and determined bravery would probably have been seconded by the whole burgher-force of Paris, and might have bid open defiance to the Federates, or, by some sudden and bold attempt, snatched from their hands their intended victim. Five hundred — but five hundred — of those who were winning barren laurels under Condé, or, yet more unhappily, were subsisting on the charity of foreign nations, might at this moment, could they have been collected in Paris, have accomplished the pur-

pose for which they themselves most desired to live, by saving the life of their unhappy Sovereign. But although powerful reasons, and yet more aggrieved feelings, had recommended the emigration from that country, it operated like the common experiment of the Leyden phial, one side of which being charged with an uncommon quantity of the electrical fluid, has the effect of creating a deficiency of the same essence upon the other. In the interior of France, the spirit of loyalty was at the lowest ebb; because those upon whom it especially acted as a principle, were divided from the rest of the nation, to whom they would otherwise have afforded both encouragement and example.

The sacrifice, therefore, was to be made — made in spite of those who certainly composed the great majority of Paris, at least of such as were capable of reflection, — in spite of the commander of the army, Dumouriez, — in spite of the consciences of the Girondists, who, while they affected an air of republican stoicism, saw plainly, and were fully sensible of the great political error, the great moral sin, they were about to commit.

Undoubtedly they expected, that by joining in, or acquiescing in at least, if not authorising, this unnecessary and wanton cruelty, they

should establish their character with the populace as firm and unshaken republicans, who had not hesitated to sacrifice the King, since his life was demanded at the shrine of freedom. They were not long of learning, that they gained nothing by their mean-spirited acquiescence in a crime which their souls must have abhorred. All were sensible that the Girondists had been all along, notwithstanding their theoretical pretensions in favour of a popular government, lingering and looking back with some favour to the dethroned prince, to whose death they only consented in sheer coldness and cowardice of heart, because it required to be defended at some hazard to their own safety. The faults at once of duplicity and cowardice were thus fixed on this party; who, detested by the Royalists, and by all who in any degree harboured opinions favourable to monarchy, had their lives and offices sought after by the whole host of Jacobins in full cry, and that on account of faint-spirited wishes, which they had scarcely dared even to attempt to render efficient.

On the 21st of January 1793, Louis XVI. was publicly beheaded in the midst of his own metropolis, in the *Place Louis Quinze*, erected to the memory of his grandfather. It is possible, for the critical eye of the historian, to discover much weakness in the conduct of this unhappy

monarch; for he had neither the determination necessary to fight for his rights, nor the power of submitting with apparent indifference to circumstances, where resistance inferred danger. He submitted, indeed, but with so bad a grace, that he only made himself suspected of cowardice, without getting credit for voluntary concession. But yet his behaviour on many trying occasions effectually vindicated him from the charge of timidity, and showed that the unwillingness to shed blood, by which he was peculiarly distinguished, arose from benevolence, not from pusillanimity.

Upon the scaffold, he behaved with the firmness which became a noble spirit, and the patience beseeeming one who was reconciled to Heaven. As one of the few marks of sympathy with which his sufferings were softened, the attendance of a confessor, who had not taken the constitutional oath, was permitted to the dethroned monarch. He who undertook the honourable but dangerous office, was a gentleman of the gifted family of Edgeworth of Edgeworthstown; and the devoted zeal with which he rendered the last duties to Louis, had like in the issue to have proved fatal to himself. As the instrument of death descended, the confessor pronounced the impressive words, — “Son of Saint Louis, ascend to Heaven!”

There was a last will of Louis XVI. circulated upon good authority, bearing this remarkable passage: — “I recommend to my son, should he have the misfortune to become King, to recollect that his whole faculties are due to the service of the public; that he ought to consult the happiness of his people, by governing according to the laws, forgetting all injuries and misfortunes, and in particular those which I may have sustained. But while I exhort him to govern under the authority of the laws, I cannot but add, that this will be only in his power, in so far as he shall be endowed with authority to cause right to be respected, and wrong punished; and that without such authority, his situation in the government must be more hurtful than advantageous to the state.”

Not to mingle the fate of the illustrious victims of the royal family with the general tale of the sufferers under the Reign of Terror, we must here mention the deaths of the rest of that illustrious house, which closed for a time a monarchy, that, existing through three dynasties, had given sixty-six kings to France.

It was not to be supposed, that the Queen was to be long permitted to survive her husband. She had been even more than he the object of revolutionary detestation; nay, many were dis-

posed to throw on Marie Antoinette, almost exclusively, the blame of those measures, which they considered as counter-revolutionary. She came to France a gay, young, and beautiful Princess — she found in her husband a faithful, affectionate, almost an uxorious husband. In the early years of her reign she was guilty of two faults.

In the first place, she dispensed too much with court-etiquette, and wished too often to enjoy a retirement and freedom, inconsistent with her high rank and the customs of the courts. This was a great though natural mistake. The etiquette of a court places round the great personages whom it regards, a close and troublesome watch, but that very guard acts as a barrier against calumny; and when these formal witnesses are withdrawn, evil tongues are never wanting to supply with infamous reports a blank, which no testimony can be brought to fill up with the truth. No individual suffered more than Marie Antoinette from this species of slander, which imputed the most scandalous occupations to hours that were only meant to be stolen from form and from state, and devoted to the ease which crowned heads ought never to dream of enjoying.

Another natural, yet equally false step, was her interfering more frequently with politics

than became her sex; exhibiting thus her power over the King, and at the same time lowering him in the eyes of his subjects, who, whatever be the auspices under which their own domestic affairs are conducted, are always scandalized if they see, or think they see, anything like female influence directing the councils of their sovereigns. We are uncertain what degree of credit is to be given to the Memoirs of Bezenval, but we believe they approach near the truth in representing the Queen as desirous of having a party of her own, and carrying points in opposition to the ministers; and we know that a general belief of this sort was the first foundation of the fatal report, that an Austrian cabal existed in the Court of France, under the direction of the Queen, which was supposed to sacrifice the interests of France to favour those of the Emperor of Germany.

The terms of her accusation were too basely depraved to be even hinted at here. She scorned to reply to it, but appealed to all who had been mothers, against the very possibility of the horrors which were stated against her. The widow of a King, the sister of an Emperor, was condemned to death, dragged in an open tumbril to the place of execution, and beheaded on the 16th October 1793. She suffered death in her 39th year.

The Princess Elizabeth, sister of Louis, of whom it might be said, in the words of Lord Clarendon, that she resembled a chapel in a King's palace, into which nothing but piety and morality enter, while all around is filled with sin, idleness, and folly, did not, by the most harmless demeanour and inoffensive character, escape the miserable fate in which the Jacobins had determined to involve the whole family of Louis XVI. Part of the accusation redounded to the honour of her character. She was accused of having admitted to the apartments of the Tuileries some of the National Guards, of the section of Filles de Saint Thomas, and causing the wounds to be looked to which they had received in a skirmish with the Marseillois, immediately before the 10th of August. The princess admitted her having done so, and it was exactly in consistence with her whole conduct. Another charge stated the ridiculous accusation, that she had distributed bullets chewed by herself and her attendants, to render them more fatal, to the defenders of the Castle of the Tuileries; a ridiculous fable, of which there was no proof whatever. She was beheaded in May 1794, and met her death as became the manner in which her life had been spent.

We are weary of recounting these atrocities, as others must be of reading them. Yet it is

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not useless that men should see how far human nature can be carried, in contradiction to every feeling the most sacred, to every pleading whether of justice or of humanity. The Dauphin we have already described as a promising child of seven years old, an age at which no offence could have been given, and from which no danger could have been apprehended. Nevertheless, it was resolved to destroy the innocent child, and by means to which ordinary murders seem deeds of mercy.

The unhappy boy was put in charge of the most hard-hearted villain whom the Community of Paris, well acquainted where such agents were to be found, were able to select from their band of Jacobins. This wretch, a shoemaker called Simon, asked his employers, "what was to be done with the young wolfwhelp; Was he to be slain?" — "No." — "Poisoned?" — "No." — "Starved to death?" — "No." — "What then?" — "He was to be got rid of." Accordingly, by a continuance of the most severe treatment — by beating, cold, vigils, fasts, and ill usage of every kind, so frail a blossom was soon blighted. He died on the 8th June 1795.

After this last horrible crime, there was a relaxation in favour of the daughter, and now the sole child, of this unhappy house. The Princess Royal, whose qualities have since honoured

even her birth and blood, experienced from this period a mitigated captivity. Finally, on the 19th December 1795, this last remaining relic of the family of Louis was permitted to leave her prison and her country, in exchange for La Fayette and others, whom, on that condition, Austria delivered from captivity. She became afterwards the wife of her cousin the Duke d'Angouleme, eldest son of the reigning monarch of France, and obtained, by the manner in which she conducted herself at Bourdeaux in 1815, the highest praise for gallantry and spirit.

CHAPTER XIV.

Dumouriez — His displeasure at the Treatment of the Flemish Provinces by the Convention — His Projects in consequence — Gains the ill-will of his army — and is forced to fly to the Austrian Camp — Lives many years in retreat, and finally dies in England. — Struggles betwixt the Girondists and Jacobins in the Convention. — Robespierre impeaches the Leaders of the Girondists — and is denounced by them. — Decree of Accusation past against Marat, who conceals himself. — Commission of Twelve appointed. — Marat acquitted, and sent back to the Convention with a Civic Crown. — Terror and indecision of the Girondists. — Jacobins prepare to attack the Palais Royal, but are Repulsed — Repair to the Convention, who recall the Commission of Twelve. — Louvet and other Girondist Leaders fly from Paris. — Convention go forth in Procession to Expostulate with the People — Forced back to their Hall, and compelled to Decree the

Accusation of Thirty of their Body. — Girondists finally Ruined — and their principal Leaders perish in Prison, by the Guillotine. and by Famine. — Close of their History.

WHILE the Republic was thus indulging the full tyranny of irresistible success over the remains of the royal family, it seemed about to sustain a severe shock from one of its own children, who had arisen to eminence by its paths. This was Dumouriez, whom we left victor at Jemappes, and conqueror, in consequence, of the Flemish provinces. These fair possessions, the Convention, without a moment's hesitation, annexed to the dominions of France; and proceeded to pour down upon them their taxgatherers, commissaries, and every other denomination of spoilers, who not only robbed without ceremony the unfortunate inhabitants, but insulted their religion by pillaging and defacing their churches, set their laws and privileges at contempt, and tyrannized over them in the very manner, which had so recently induced the Flemings to offer resistance to their own hereditary princes of the House of Austria.

Dumouriez, naturally proud of his conquest, felt for those who had surrendered to his arms

upon assurance of being well treated, and was sensible that his own honour and influence were aimed at; and that it was the object of the Convention to make use of his abilities only as their implements, and to keep his army in a state of complete dependence upon themselves.

The general, on the contrary, had the ambition as well as the talents of a conqueror; he considered his army as the means of attaining the victories, which, without him, they could not have achieved, and he desired to retain it under his own immediate command, as a combatant wishes to keep hold of the sword which he has wielded with success. He accounted himself strongly possessed of the hearts of his soldiers, and therefore thought himself qualified to play the part of military umpire in the divisions of the state, which La Fayette had attempted in vain; and it was with this view, doubtless, that he undertook that expedition to Paris, in which he vainly attempted a mediation in behalf of the King.

After leaving Paris, Dumouriez seems to have abandoned Louis personally to his fate, yet still retaining hopes to curb the headlong course of the Revolution.

Two plans presented themselves to his fertile invention, nor can it be known with certainty to which he most inclined. He may have en-

tertaind the idea of prevailing upon the army to decide for the youthful Dauphin to be their Constitutional King; or, as many have thought, it may better have suited his personal views to have recommended to the throne a gallant young prince of the blood, who had distinguished himself in his army, the eldest son of the miserable Duke of Orleans. Such a change of dynasty might be supposed to limit the wishes of the proposed sovereign to that share of power intrusted to him by the Revolution, since he would have had no title to the crown save what arose from the Constitution. But, to qualify himself in either case to act as the supreme head of the army, independent of the National Convention, it was necessary that Dumouriez should pursue his conquests, act upon the plan laid down by the ministers at Paris, and in addition to his title of victor in Belgium, add that of conqueror of Holland. He commenced, accordingly, an invasion of the latter country, with some prospect of success. But though he took Gertruydenberg, and blockaded Bergen op-Zoom, he was repulsed from Williamstadt; and at the same time he received information that an army of Austrians, under the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, a general of eminence, though belonging to the old military school of Germany, was advancing into Flanders. Dumouriez retreated from Holland to make a

stand against these new enemies, and was again unfortunate. The French were defeated at Aix-la-Chapelle, and their new levies almost entirely dispersed. Chagrined with this disaster, Dumouriez gave an imprudent loose to the warmth of his temper. Following the false step of La Fayette, in menacing before he was prepared to strike, he wrote a letter to the Convention, threatening the Jacobin party with the indignation of his army. This was on the 12th March 1793, and six days afterwards he was again defeated in the battle of Neerwinden.

It must have been extremely doubtful, whether, in the very pitch of victory, Dumouriez possessed enough of individual influence over his army, to have inclined them to declare against the National Convention. The forces which he commanded were not to be regarded in the light of a regular army, long embodied, and engaged perhaps for years in difficult enterprises, and in foreign countries, where such a force exists as a community only by their military relations to each other; where the common soldiers know no other home than their tents, and no other direction than the voice of their officers; and the officers no other laws than the pleasure of the general. Such armies, holding themselves independent of the civil authorities of their country, came at

length, through the habit of long wars and distant conquests, to exist in the French empire, and upon such rested the foundation-stone of the Imperial throne; but as yet, the troops of the Republic consisted either of the regiments revolutionized, when the great change had offered commissions to privates, and batons to subalterns, or of new levies, who had their very existence through the Revolution, and whose common nickname of Carmagnols, expressed their Republican origin and opinions. Such troops might obey the voice of the general on the actual field of battle, but were not very amenable even to the ordinary course of discipline elsewhere, and were not likely to exchange their rooted political principles, with all the ideas of licence connected with them, at Dumouriez's word of command, as they would have changed their front, or have adopted any routine military movement. Still less were they likely implicitly to obey this commander, when the *prestige* of his fortune seemed in the act of abandoning him, and least of all, when they found him disposed to make a compromise with the very foe who had defeated him, and perceived that he negotiated, by abandoning his conquests to the Austrians, to purchase the opportunity or permission of executing the counter-revolution which he proposed.

Nevertheless, Dumouriez, either pushed on by an active and sanguine temper, or being too far advanced to retreat, endeavoured, by intrigues in his own army, and an understanding with the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, to render himself strong enough to overset the reigning party in the Convention, and restore, with some modifications, the Constitution of 1791. He expressed this purpose with imprudent openness. Several generals of division declared against his scheme. He failed in obtaining possession of the fortresses of Lisle, Valenciennes, and Condé. Another act of imprudence aggravated the unpopularity into which he began to fall with his army. Four Commissioners of the Convention remonstrated publicly on the course he was pursuing. Dumouriez, not contented with arresting them, had the imprudence to send them to the camp of the Austrians prisoners, thus delivering up to the public enemy the representatives of the government under which he was appointed, and for which he had hitherto acted, and proclaiming his alliance with the invaders whom he was commissioned to oppose.

All this rash conduct disunited the tie between Dumouriez and his army. The resistance to his authority became general, and finally, it was with great difficulty and danger that he made his

escape to the Austrian camp, with his young friend the Duke de Chartres.

All that this able and ambitious man saved in his retreat was merely his life, of which he spent some years afterwards in Germany, concluding it in England about 1822, without again making any figure in the political horizon. *) Thus, the attempt of Dumouriez, to use military force to stem the progress of the Revolution, failed, like that of La Fayette some months before. To use a medical simile, the imposthume was not yet far enough advanced, and sufficiently come to a head, to be benefitted by the use of the lancet.

Meanwhile, the Convention, though triumphant over the schemes of the revolted general, was divided by the two parties to whom its walls served for an arena, in which to aim against each other the most deadly blows. It was now manifest that the strife must end tragically for one of the parties, and all circumstances pointed out the Girondists as the victims. They had indeed still the command of majorities in the Convention, especially when the votes were taken by scrutiny

*) Dumouriez was a man of pleasing manners and lively conversation. He lived in retirement, near Ealing, in Middlesex, and died only within these last two or three years.

or ballot; on which occasions the feeblers deputies of the Plain could give their voice according to their consciences, without its being known that they had done so. But in open debate, and when the members voted *viva voce*, amongst the intimidating cries and threats of tribunes filled by an infuriated audience, the spirit of truth and justice seemed too nearly allied to that of martyrdom, to be prevalent generally amongst men who made their own safety the rule of their political conduct. The party, however, continued for several months to exercise the duties of administration, and to make such a struggle in the Convention as could be achieved by oratory and reasoning, against underhand intrigue, supported by violent declamation, and which was, upon the least signal, sure of the aid of actual brutal violence.

The Girondists, we have seen, had aimed decrees of the Assembly at the triumvirate, and a plot was now laid among the Jacobins, to repay that intended distinction by the actual strokes of the axe, or, failing that, of the dagger.

When the news of Dumouriez's defection arrived, the Jacobins, always alert in prepossessing the public mind, held out the Girondists as the associates of the revolted general. It was on them whom they directed the public animosity, great and furious in proportion to the nature of the

crisis. That majority of the Convention, whom the traitor Dumouriez affirmed was sound, and with which he acted in concert, intimated, according to the Jacobins, the Girondists the allies of his treasons. They called out in the Convention, on the 8th of March, for a tribunal of judgment fit to decide on such crimes, without the delays arising from ordinary forms of pleading and evidence, and without even the intervention of a jury. The Girondists opposed this measure, and the debate was violent. In the course of the subsequent days, an insurrection of the people was prepared by the Jacobins, as upon the 20th June and 10th of August. It ought to have broken out upon the 10th of March, which was the day destined to put an end to the ministerial party by a general massacre. But the Girondists received early intelligence of what was intended, and absented themselves from the Convention on the day of peril. A body of Federates from Brest, about 400 strong, were also detached in their favour by Kevelegan, one of the deputies from the ancient province of Bretagne, and who was a zealous Girondist. The precaution, however slight, was sufficient for the time. The men who were prepared to murder, were unwilling to fight, however strong the odds on their side; and the mustering of the Jacobin braves proved, on this occasion, an empty menace.

Duly improved, a discovered conspiracy is generally of advantage to the party against which it was framed, But Vergniaud, when, in a subsequent sitting, he denounced to the Convention the existence of a conspiracy to put to death a number of the deputies, was contented to impute it to the influence of the aristocracy, of the nobles, the priests, and the emissaries of Pitt and Coburg; thus suffering the Jacobins to escape every imputation of that blame, which all the world knew attached to them, and to them only. He was loudly applauded. Marat, who rose after him, was applauded as loudly, and the Revolutionary Tribunal was established.

Louvet, who exclaims against Vergniaud for his pusillanimity, says, that the orator alleged in his excuse, "the danger of incensing violent men, already capable for all excesses." They had come to the boarchase, they had roused him and provoked his anger, and now they felt, too late, that they lacked weapons with which to attack the irritated monster. The plot of the 10th March had been compared to that of the Catholics on the 5th November, in England. It had been described in the *Moniteur* as a horrible conspiracy, by which a company of ruffians, assuming the title of *de la Glacière*, in remembrance of the massacre of Avignon, surrounded the hall for two days, with the purpose of dis-

solving the National Convention by force, and putting to death a great proportion of the deputies. Yet the Convention passed over, without effective prosecution of any kind, a crime of so enormous a die; and in doing so, showed themselves more afraid of immediate personal consequences, than desirous of seizing an opportunity to rid France of the horrible faction by whom they were scourged and menaced.

In the midst of next month the Jacobins became the assailants, proud, it may be supposed, of the impunity under which they had been sheltered. Robespierre impeached by name the leaders of the Girondists, as accomplices of Dumouriez. But it was not in the Convention where Robespierre's force lay. Guadet, with great eloquence, repelled the charge, and in his turn denounced Robespierre and the Jacobins. He proclaimed to the Convention that they sat and debated under raised sabres and poniards, which a moment's signal could let loose on them; and he read from the Journal conducted by Marat, an appeal, calling on the people to rise in insurrection. Fear and shame gave the Convention momentary courage. They passed a decree of accusation against Marat, who was obliged to conceal himself for a few days.

Buzot, it may be remarked, censures this decree against Marat as impolitic, seeing it was

the first innovation affecting the inviolability of the persons of the deputies. In point of principle he is certainly right; but as to any practical effects resulting from this breach of privilege, by reprisals on the other side, we are quite sceptical. Whatever violence was done to the Girondists, at the end of the conflict, was sure to have befallen them, whether Marat had been arrested or not. Precedents were as useless to such men, as a vizard to one of their ruffians. Both could do their business barefaced.

The Convention went farther than the decree of accusation against Marat; and for the first time showed their intention to make a stand against the Jacobins. They nominated a commission of Twelve Members, some Girondists, some neutrals, to watch over and repress the movements of such citizens as should seem disposed to favour anarchy.

The Convention were not long of learning the character of the opposition which they had now defied. Pache, Mayor of Paris, and one of the worst men of the Revolution, appeared at the bar of the Convention with two thousand petitioners, as they were called. They demanded, in the name of the sections, the arrest of twenty-two of the most distinguished of the Girondists leaders. The Convention got rid of the petition by passing to the order of the day. But the

courage of the anarchists was greatly increased; and they saw that they had only to bear down with repeated attacks an enemy who had no fortification save the frail defences of the law, which it was the pride of the Jacobins to surmount and to defy. Their demand of proscription against these unfortunate deputies was a measure from which they never departed; and their audacity in urging it placed that party on the defensive, who ought, in all reason, to have been active in the attack.

The Girondists, however, felt the extremity to which they were reduced, and sensible of the great advantage to be attained by being the assailants in such a struggle, they endeavoured to regain the offensive.

The Revolutionary Tribunal to which Marat had been sent by the decree of accusation, knew their business too well to convict any one, much less such a distinguished patriot, who was only accused of stimulating the people to exercise the sacred right of insurrection. He was honourably acquitted, after scarcely the semblance of a trial, and brought back to his place in the Convention, crowned with a civic coronet, and accompanied by a band of such determined ruffians as were worthy to form his bodyguard. They insisted on filing through the hall, while a huge pioneer, their spokesman, assured the Convention that the

people loved Marat, and that the cause of Marat and the people would always be the same.

Meanwhile, the Committee of Twelve proceeded against the Terrorists with some vigour. One of the most furious provokers of insurrection and murder was Hebert, a devoted Jacobin, substitute of the Procureur Syndic of the Community. Speaking to this body, who now exercised the whole powers of magistracy in Paris, this man had not blushed to demand the heads of three hundred deputies. He was arrested and committed to prison.

This decisive action ought in policy to have been followed by other steps equally firm. The Girondists, by displaying confidence, might surely have united to themselves a large number of the neutral party; and might have established an interest in the sections of Paris, consisting of men, who, though timid without leaders, held in deep horror the revolutionary faction, and trembled for their families and their property, if put under the guardianship, as it had been delicately expressed, of the rabble of the faubourgs. The very show of four hundred Bretons had disconcerted the whole conspiracy of the 10th of March; and therefore, with a moderate support of determined men, statesmen of a more resolute and practised character than these theoretical philosophers, might have bid defiance to

the mere mob of Paris, aided by a few hundreds of hired ruffians. At the worst they would have perished in attempting to save their country from the most vile and horrible tyranny.

The Girondists, however, sat in the Convention, like wild-fowl when the hawk is abroad, afraid either to remain where they were, or to attempt a flight. Yet, as they could make no armed interest in Paris, there was much to induce them to quit the metropolis, and seek a place of free deliberation elsewhere. France, indeed, was in such a state, that had these unfortunate experimentalists possessed any influence in almost any department, they could hardly have failed to bring friends around them, if they had effected a retreat to it. Versailles seems to have been thought of as the scene of their adjournment, by those who nourished such an idea; and it was believed that the inhabitants of that town, repentant of the part they had played in driving from them the royal family and the Legislative Body, would have stood in their defence. But neither from the public journals and histories of the time, nor from the private memoirs of Buzot, Barbaroux, or Louvet, does it appear that these infatuated philosophers thought either of flight or defence. They appear to have resembled the wretched animal, whose chance of escape from its enemies rests only in the pitiful

cries which it utters when seized. Their whole system was a castle in the air, and when it vanished they could only sit down and lament over it. On the other hand, it must be allowed to the Girondists, that the inefficiency and imbecility of their conduct was not to be attributed to personal cowardice. Enthusiasts in their political opinions, they saw their ruin approaching, waited for it, and dared it; but like that of the monarch they had been so eager to dethrone, and by dethroning whom they had made way for their own ruin, their resolution was of a passive, not an active character; patient and steady to endure wrong, but inefficient where the object was to do right towards themselves and France.

For many nights these unhappy and devoted deputies, still possessed of the ministerial power, were so far from being able to ensure their own safety, or that of the country under their nominal government, that they had shifted about from one place of rendezvous to another, not daring to occupy their own lodgings, and usually remaining, three or four together, armed for defence of their lives, in such places of secrecy and safety as they could devise.

It was on the night preceding the 30th of May, that Louvet, with five of the most distinguished of the Girondists party, had absconded into such

a retreat, more like robbers afraid of the police than legislators, when the tocsin was rung at dead of night. Rabaud de Saint Etienne, a Protestant clergyman, and one of the most distinguished of the party for humanity and resolution, received it as a deathknell, and continued to repeat, *Ille suprema dies*.

The alarm was designed to raise the suburbs; but in this task the Jacobins do not seem to have had the usual facilities — at last they began by putting their bloodhounds on a scent, upon which they thought them likely to run more readily than the mere murder or arrest of twenty or thirty deputies of the Convention. They devised one which suited admirably, both to alarm the wealthier citizens, and teach them to be contented with looking to their own safety, and to animate the rabble with the hope of plunder. The rumour was spread, that the section of La Butte - des - Moulins, comprehending the Palais Royal, and the most wealthy shops in Paris, had become counter-revolutionary — had displayed the white cockade, and were declaring for the Bourbons.

Of this not a word was true. The citizens of the Palais Royal were disposed perhaps to royalty — certainly for a quiet and established government — but loved their own shops much better than the House of Bourbon, and had no in-

tention of placing them in jeopardy either for king or kaiser. They heard with alarm the accusation against them, mustered in defence of their property, shut the gates of the Palais Royal which admits of being strongly defended, turned cannon with lighted matches upon the mob as they approached their precincts, and showed, in a way sufficient to intimidate the rabble of Saint Antoine, that though the wealthy burgesses of Paris might abandon to the mob the care of killing kings and changing ministries, they had no intention whatsoever to yield up to them the charge of their counters and tills. Five sections were under arms and ready to act. Not one of the Girondists party seems to have even attempted to point out to them, that by an exertion to preserve the independence of the Convention, they might rid themselves for ever of the domination, and which all who had property, feeling, or education, were rendered slaves by these recurring insurrections. This is the more extraordinary, as Raffé, the commandant of the section of La Butte-des-Moulins, had actually marched to the assistance of the Convention on the 10th of March, then, as now, besieged by an armed force.

Left to themselves, the sections who were in arms to protect order, thought it enough to provide against the main danger of the moment.

The sight of their array, and of their determined appearance, far more than their three-coloured cockades, and cries of «Vive la Republique,» were sufficient to make the insurgents recognise those as good citizens, who could not be convicted of *incivism* without a bloody combat.

They were, however, at length made to comprehend by their leaders, that the business to be done lay in the Hall of the Convention, and that the exertions of each active citizen were to entitle him to forty *sous* for the day's work. In the whole affair there was so much of cold trick, and so little popular enthusiasm, that it is difficult to believe that the plotters might not have been countermined and blown to the moon with their own petard, had there been active spirit or practical courage on the side of those who were the assailed party. But we see no symptoms of either. The Convention were surrounded by the rabble, and menaced in the grossest terms. Under the general terror inspired by their situation, they finally recalled the Commission of Twelve, and set Hebert at liberty; — concessions which, though short of those which the Jacobins had determined to insist upon, were such as showed that the power of the Convention was entirely destroyed, and that the Girondists itself might be overawed at the pleasure of whomsoever should command the mob of Paris.

The Jacobins were now determined to follow up their blow, by destroying the enemy whom they had disarmed. The 2d of June was fixed for this purpose. Louvet, and some others of the Girondist party, did not choose to await the issue, but fled from Paris. To secure the rest of the devoted party, the barriers of the city were shut.

On this decisive occasion the Jacobins had not trusted entirely to the efficiency of their suburb forces. They had also under their orders about two thousand Federates, who were encamped in the Champs Elisées, and had been long tutored in the part they had to act. They harnessed guns and howitzers, prepared grape-shot and shells, and actually heated shot redhot, as if their purpose had been to attack some strong fortress, instead of a hall filled with the unarmed representatives of the people. Henriot, commander-general of the armed force of Paris, a fierce, ignorant man, entirely devoted to the Jacobin interest, took care, in posting the armed force which arrived from all hands around the Convention, to station those nearest to the Legislative Body, whose dispositions with regard to them were most notoriously violent. They were thus entirely surrounded as if in a net, and the Jacobins had little more to do than to select their victims.

The universal cry of the armed men who surrounded the Convention, was for a decree of death or outlawry against twenty-two members of the Girondists party, who had been pointed out, by the petition of Pache, and by subsequent petitions of the most inflammatory nature, as accomplices of Dumouriez, enemies of the good city of Paris, and traitors, who meditated a federative instead of an indivisible Republic. This list of proscription included the ministers.

The Convention were in a dreadful situation; it was manifest that the arm of strong force was upon them. Those who were supposed to belong to the Girondist party, were struck and abused as they entered the hall, hooted and threatened as they arose to deliver their opinion. The members were no longer free to speak or vote. There could be no deliberation within the Assembly, while such a scene of tumult and fury continued and increased without.

Barrere, leader, as we have said, of the Plain, or neutral party, who thought with the Girondists in conscience, and acted with the Jacobins in fear, proposed one of those seemingly moderate measures, which involve as sure destruction to those who adopt them, as if their character were more decisively hostile. With compliments to their good intentions, with lamentations for the emergency, he entreated the pro-

scribed Girondists to sacrifice themselves, as the unhappy subjects of disunion in the Republic, and to resign their character of deputies. The Convention, he said, would then declare them under the protection of the law, — as if they were not invested with that protection while they were convicted of no crime, and clothed at the same time with the inviolability, of which he advised them to divest themselves. It was as if a man were requested to lay aside his armour, on the promise that the ordinary garments which he wore under it should be rendered impenetrable.

But a Frenchman is easily induced to do that to which he is provoked, as involving a point of honour. This treacherous advice was adopted by Isnard, Dussaux, and others of the proscribed deputies, who were thus persuaded to abandon what defences remained to them, in hopes to soften the ferocity of an enemy, too inveterate to entertain feelings of generosity.

Lanjuinais maintained a more honourable struggle. "Expect not from me," he said to the Convention, "to hear either of submission, or resignation of my official character. Am I free to offer such a resignation, or are you free to receive it?" As he would have turned his eloquence against Robespierre and the Jacobins, an attempt was made by Legendre and Chabot to

drag him from the tribune. While he resisted he received several blows. "Cruel men!" he exclaimed — "The Heathens adorned and caressed the victims whom they led to the slaughter — you load them with blows and insult"

Shame procured him a moment's hearing, during which he harangued the Assembly with much effect on the baseness, treachery, cruelty, and impolicy, of thus surrendering their brethren to the call of a bloodthirsty multitude from without, stimulated by a vengeful minority of their own members. The Convention made an effort to free themselves from the toils in which they were entangled. They resolved to go out in a body, and ascertain what respect would be paid to their persons by the armed force assembled around them.

They sallied forth accordingly, in procession, into the gardens of the Tuileries, the Jacobins alone remaining in the Hall; but their progress was presently arrested by Henriot, at the head of a strong military staff, and a large body of troops. Every passage leading from the gardens was secured by soldiers. The President read the decree of the Assembly, and commanded Henriot's obedience. The commandant of Paris only replied by reining back his horse, and commanding the troops to stand to their arms. "Re-

turn to your posts," he said to the terrified legislators; "the people demand the traitors who are in the bosom of your Assembly, and will not depart till their will is accomplished." Marat came up presently afterwards at the head of a select band of a hundred ruffians. He called on the multitude to stand firm to their purpose, and commanded the Convention, in the name of the people, to return to their place of meeting, to deliberate, and, above all, to obey.

The Convention re-entered their Hall in the last degree of consternation, prepared to submit to the infamy which now seemed inevitable, yet loathing themselves for their cowardice, even while obeying the dictates of self-preservation. The Jacobins meanwhile enhanced their demand, like Her who sold the books of the Sibyls. Instead of twenty-two deputies, the accusation of thirty was now demanded. Amid terror mingled with acclamations, the decree was declared to be carried. This doom of proscription passed on the motion of Couthon; a decrepid being, whose lower extremities were paralysed, — whose benevolence of feeling seemed to pour itself out in the most gentle expressions, uttered in the most melodious tones, — whose sensibility led him constantly to foster a favourite spaniel in his bosom, that he might have something on which to bestow kindness and caresses, — but who wa-

at heart as fierce as Danton, and as pitiless as Robespierre.

Great part of the Convention did not join in this vote, protesting loudly against the force imposed on them. Several of the proscribed deputies were arrested, others escaped from the Hall by the connivance of their brethren, and of the official persons attached to the Convention, some, foreseeing their fate, had absented themselves from the meeting, and were already fled from Paris.

Thus fell, without a blow struck, or sword drawn in their defence, the party in the Convention which claimed the praise of acting upon pure Republican principles — who had overthrown the throne, and led the way to anarchy, merely to perfect an ideal theory. They fell, as the wisest of them admitted, dupes to their own system, and to the vain and impracticable idea of ruling a large and corrupt empire, by the motives which may sway a small and virtuous community. They might, as they too late discovered, have as well attempted to found the Capitol on a bottomless and quaking marsh, as their pretended Republic in a country like France. The violent revolutionary expedients, the means by which they acted, were turned against them by men, whose ends were worse than their own. The Girondists had gloried in their share of the

triumphs of the 10th of August; yet what was that celebrated day, save an insurrection of the populace against the constituted authority of the time, as those of the 31st of May and 2d of June 1793, under which the Girondists succumbed, were directed against them as successors in the government? In the one case, a King was dethroned; in the other, a government or band of ministers dismissed. And if the people had a right, as the Girondists claimed in their behalf, to act as the executioners of their own will in the one instance, it is difficult to see upon what principle their power should be trammelled in the other,

In the important process against the King, the Girondists had shown themselves pusillanimous; — desirous to save the life of a guiltless man, they dared not boldly vouch his innocence, but sheltered themselves under evasions which sacrificed his character, while they could not protect his life. After committing this great error, they lost every chance of rallying with efficacy under their standard what might remain of well-intentioned individuals in Paris and in France, who, if they had seen the Girondists, when in power, conduct themselves with firmness, would probably rather have ranked themselves in the train of men who were friends to social order, however republican their tenets, than have

given way to the anarchy which was doomed to ensue.

Upon all their own faults, whether of act or of omission, the unfortunate Girondists had now ample time to meditate. Twenty-two of their leading members, arrested on the fatal 2d of June, already waited their doom in prison, while the others wandered on, in distress and misery, through the different departments of France.

The fate of those who were prisoners was not very long suspended. In about three months they were brought to trial, and convicted — of *Royalism*! Such was the temper of France at the time, and so gross the impositions which might be put upon the people, that the men in the empire, who, upon abstract principle, were most averse to monarchy, and who had sacrificed even their consciences to join with the Jacobins in pulling down the throne, were now accused and convicted of being Royalists; and that at a time when what remained of the royal family was at so low an ebb, that the imprisoned Queen could not obtain the most ordinary book for the use of her son, without a direct and formal application to the Community of Paris. *)

*) Witness the following entry in the minutes of the *Commune*, on a day, be it remarked,

When the Girondists were brought before the tribunal, the people seem to have shown more interest in men, whose distinguished talents had so often swayed the Legislative Body, than was altogether acceptable to the Jacobins, who were induced to fear some difficulty in carrying through their conviction. They obtained a decree from the Convention, declaring that the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal should be at liberty to close the procedure so soon as the Jury should have made up their minds, and without hearing the accused in their defence. This frightful expedient of cutting short the debate, (*couper la parole* was the phrase,) was often resorted to on those revolutionary trials. Unquestionably, they dreaded the reasoning of Brissot, and the eloquence of Vergniaud, of which they had so long and so often experienced the thunders. One crime, — and it was a fatal offence, considering before what judicature they stood, — seems to have been made out by Brissot's own letters. It was that by which the late members attempted to effect a combination among the departments,

betwixt the 29th May and the 2d June:
 «Antoinette fait demander pour son fils le
 roman de Gil Blas de Santillane — ac-
 cordé.»

for the purpose of counterpoising, if possible, the tremendous influence which the capital and the revolutionary part of its magistracy exercised over the Convention, whom Paris detained prisoners within her walls. This delinquency alone was well calculated to remove all scruples from the minds of a jury, selected from that very class of Parisians, whose dreadful importance would have been altogether annihilated by the success of such a scheme. The accused were found guilty as conspirators against the unity and indivisibility of the Republic, and the liberty and safety of the French people.

When the sentence of death was pronounced, one of their number, Valazé, plunged a dagger in his bosom. The rest suffered in terms of the sentence, and were conveyed to the place of execution in the same tumbril with the bloody corpse of their suicide colleague. Fauchet, a renegade priest, showed signs of remorse. The rest affected a Roman resolution, and went to execution singing a parody on the Hymn of the Marseillois, in which that famous composition was turned against the Jacobins. They had long rejected the aids of religion, which, early received and cherished, would have guided their steps in prosperity, and sustained them in adversity. Their remaining stay was only that of the

same vain and speculative philosophy, which had so deplorably influenced their political conduct.

Those members of the Girondist party, who, escaping from Paris to the departments, avoided their fate somewhat longer, saw little reason to pride themselves on the political part they had chosen to act. They found the eastern and southern departments in a ferment against Paris and the Jacobins, and ready to rise in arms; but they became aware, at the same time, that no one was thinking of or regretting their system of a pure republic, the motives by which the malcontents were agitated being of a very different, and far more practical character. Great part of the nation, all at least of better feelings, had been deeply affected by the undeserved fate of the King, and the cruelty with which his family had been, and were still treated. The rich feared to be pillaged and murdered by the Jacobins; the poor suffered no less under scarcity of grain, under the depreciation of assignats, and a compulsory levy of no less than three hundred thousand men over France, to supply the enormous losses of the French army. But everywhere the insurrections took a Royalist, and not a Republican character; and although the Girondists were received at Caen and elsewhere with compassion and respect, the votes they had given in the King's trial, and their

fanatic zeal for a kind of government for which France was totally unfitted, and which those from whom they obtained refuge were far from desiring, prevented their playing any distinguished part in the disturbed districts of the West.

Buzot seems to see this in the true sense. "It is certain," he says, "that if we could have rested our pretensions upon having wished to establish in France a moderate government of that character, which, according to many well-instructed persons, best suited the people of France," (indicating a limited monarchy,) "we might have entertained hopes of forming a formidable coalition in the department of Calvados, and rallying around us all whom ancient prejudices attached to royalty. As it was, they were only regarded as a few enthusiasts, whom the example of America had induced to attempt the establishment of a republic, in a country where all hopes and wishes, save those of the Jacobins, and the vile rabble whom they courted and governed, were turned towards a moderate monarchy. Buzot also observed, that the many violences and atrocities, forced levies, and other acts of oppression practised in the name of the Republic, had disgusted men with a form of government, where cruelty seemed to rule over misery by the sole aid of terror. With more

candour than some of his companions, he avows his error, and admits that he would, at this closing scene, have willingly united with the moderate monarchists, to establish royalty under the safeguard of constitutional restraints.

Several of the deputies, Louvet, Riouffe, Barbaroux, Pethion, and others, united themselves with a body of Royalists of Bretagne, to whom General Wimpfen had given something of the name of an army, but which never attained the solidity of one. It was defeated at Vernon, and never afterwards could be again assembled.

The proscribed deputies, at first with a few armed associates, afterwards entirely deserted, wandered through the country, incurring some romantic adventures, which have been recorded by the pen of their historian, Louvet. At length, six of the party succeeded in obtaining the means of transportation to Bourdeaux, the capital of that Gironde from which their party derived its name, and which those who were natives of it, remembering only the limited society in which they had first acquired their fame, had described as possessing and cherishing the purest principles of philosophical freedom. Guadet had protested to his companions in misfortune a thousand times, that if liberal, honourable, and generous sentiments were chased from every other corner of France, they were nevertheless sure to find

refuge in *La Gironde*. The proscribed wanderers had well nigh kissed the land of refuge, when they disembarked, as in a country of assured protection. But Bourdeaux was by this time no more than a wealthy trading town, where the rich, trembling before the poor, were not willing to increase their own imminent danger, by intermeddling with the misfortunes of others. All doors, or nearly so, of *La Gironde* itself, were shut against the Girondists, and they wandered outcasts in the country, suffering every extremity of toil and hunger, and bringing, in some cases, death upon the friends who ventured to afford them refuge.

Louvet alone escaped, of the six Girondists who took refuge in their own peculiar province. Guadet, Salles, and the enthusiastic Barbaroux, were seized and executed at Bourdeaux, but not till the last had twice attempted suicide with his pistols. Buzot and Pethion killed themselves in extremity, and were found dead in a field of corn. This was the same Pethion who had been so long the idol of the Parisians, and who, when the forfeiture of the King was resolved on, had been heard to say with simple vanity, "If they should force *me* to become Regent now, I cannot see any means by which I can avoid it." Others of this unhappy party shared the same melancholy fate. Condorcet, who had pronounced

his vote for the King's life, but in perpetual fetters, was arrested, and poisoned himself. Rabaud de St Etienne was betrayed by a friend in whom he trusted, and was executed. Roland was found dead in the high road, accomplishing a prophecy of his wife, whom the Jacobins had condemned to death, and who had declared her conviction that her husband would not long survive her. That remarkable woman, happy if her high talents had, in youth, fallen under the direction of those who could better have cultivated them, made before the revolutionary tribunal a defence more manly than the most eloquent of the Girondins. The bystanders, who had become amateurs in cruelty, were as much delighted with her deportment, as the hunter with the pulling down a noble stag. "What sense," they said; "what wit, what courage! What a magnificent spectacle it will be to behold such a woman upon the scaffold!" She met her death with great firmness, and, as she passed the statue of Liberty, on her road to execution, she exclaimed, "Ah, Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name!"

About forty-two of the Girondist deputies perished by the guillotine, by suicide, or by the fatigue of their wanderings. About twenty-four escaped these perils, and were, after many and various sufferings, recalled to the Conven-

tion, when the Jacobin influence was destroyed. They owed their fall to the fantastic philosophy and visionary theories which they had adopted, not less than to their presumptuous confidence, that popular assemblies, when actuated by the most violent personal feelings, must yield to the weight of argument, as inanimate bodies obey the impulse of external force; and that they who possess the highest powers of oratory, can, by mere elocution, take the weight from clubs, the edge from sabres, and the angry and brutal passions from those who wield them. They made no further figure as a party in any of the state changes in France; and, in relation to their experimental republic, may remind the reader of the presumptuous champion of antiquity, who was caught in the cleft oak, which he in vain attempted to rend asunder. History has no more to say on the subject of La Gironde, considered as a party name.

CHAPTER XV.

Views of Parties in Britain relative to the Revolution. — Affiliated Societies — Counterpoised by Aristocratic Associations. — Aristocratic Party eager for War with France. — The French proclaim the Navigation of the Scheldt. — British Ambassador recalled from Paris, and French Envoy no longer accredited in London. — France declares War against England. — British Army sent to Holland, under the Duke of York — State of the Army. — View of the Military Positions of France — in Flanders — on the Rhine — in Piedmont — Savoy — on the Pyrenees. — State of the War in La Vendée — Description of the Country — Le Bocage — Le Louroux — Close Union betwixt the Nobles and Peasantry — Both strongly attached to Royalty, and abhorrent of the Revolution. — The Priests. — The Religion of the Vendéans outraged by the Convention. — A general insurrection takes

place in 1793. — *Military Organization and Habits of the Vendéans.* — *Division in the British Cabinet on the Mode of conducting the War.* — *Pitt.* — *Windham.* — *Reasoning upon the Subject.* — *Capitulation of Mentz enables 15,000 Veterans to act in La Vendée.* — *Vendéans defeated, and pass the Loire* — *They defeat, in their turn, the French Troops at Laval* — *But are ultimately destroyed and dispersed.* — *Unfortunate Expedition to Quiberon.* — *La Charette defeated and executed, and the War of La Vendée finally terminated.* — *Return to the State of France in Spring 1793.* — *Unsuccessful Resistance of Bourdeaux, Marseilles, and Lyons, to the Convention.* — *Siege of Lyons* — *Its Surrender and dreadful Punishment.* — *Siege of Toulon.*

THE Jacobins, by their successive victories on the 31st May and 2d June 1793, had vanquished and driven from the field their adversaries; and we have already seen with what fury they had pursued their scattered enemies, and dealt among them vengeance and death. But the situation of the country, both in regard to external and internal relations, was so precarious, that it required the exertion of men as bold and unhesitat-

ing as now assumed the guidance of the power of France, to exert the energies necessary to repel foreign force, and at the same time to subdue internal dissension.

We have seen that England had become in a great measure divided into two large parties, one of which continued to applaud the French Revolution, although the wise and good among them reprobated its excesses; while the other, with eyes fixed in detestation upon the cruelties, confiscations, and horrors of every description which it had given rise to, looked on the very name of this great change, — though no doubt comprehending much good as well as evil — with the unmixed feelings of men contemplating a spectacle equally dreadful and disgusting.

The affair of the 10th of August, and the approaching fate of the King, excited general interest in Britain; and a strong inclination became visible among the higher and middling classes, that the nation should take up arms, and interfere in the fate of the unhappy Louis.

Mr Pitt had been making up his mind to the same point; but feeling how much his own high talents were turned to the improvement of the internal regulations and finances of the country, he hesitated for some time to adopt a hostile course, though approved by the sovereign, and demanded by a large proportion of his subjects.

But new circumstances arose every day to compel a decision on this important point.

The French, whether in their individual or collective capacities, have been always desirous to take the lead among European nations, and to be considered as the foremost member of the civilized republic. In almost all her vicissitudes, France has addressed herself as much to the citizens of other countries as to those of her own; and it was thus, that in the speeches of her statesmen, invitations were thrown out to the subjects of other states, to imitate the example of the Republic, cast away the rubbish of their old institutions, dethrone their Kings, demolish their nobility, divide the lands of the church and the aristocracy among the lower classes, and arise a free and regenerated people. In Britain as elsewhere, these doctrines carried a fascinating sound; for Britain as well as France had men of parts, who thought themselves neglected, men of merit, who conceived themselves oppressed, — experimentalists, who would willingly put the laws in their revolutionary crucible, — and men desirous of novelties in the church and in the state, either from the eagerness of restless curiosity, or the hopes of bettering by the change. Above all, Britain had a far too ample mass of poverty and ignorance, subject always to be acted upon by the hope of

license. Affiliated societies were formed in almost all the towns of Great Britain. They corresponded with each other, held very high and intimidating language, and seemed to frame themselves on the French model. They addressed the National Convention of France directly in the name of their own bodies, and of societies united for the same purpose; and congratulated them on their freedom, and on the manner in which they had gained it, with many a broad hint that their example would not be lost on Britain. The persons who composed these societies had, generally speaking, little pretension to rank or influence; and though they contained some men of considerable parts, there was a deficiency of anything like weight or respectability in their meetings. Their consequence lay chiefly in the numbers who were likely to be influenced by their arguments; and these were extraordinarily great, especially in large towns, and in the manufacturing districts. That state of things began to take place in Britain, which had preceded the French Revolution, but the British aristocracy, well cemented together, and possessing great weight in the state, took the alarm sooner, and adopted precautions more effectual, than had been thought of in France. They associated together in political unions on their side, and, by the weight of influence, character,

and fortune, soon obtained a superiority, which made it dangerous, or at least inconvenient, to many, whose situations in society rendered them in some degree dependent upon the favour of the aristocracy, to dissent violently from their opinions. The political Shibboleth, used by these associations, was a renunciation of the doctrines of the French Revolution; and they have been reproached that this abhorrence was expressed by some of them in terms so strong, as if designed to withhold the subscribers from attempting any reformation in their own government, even by the most constitutional means. In short, while the democratical party made in their clubs the most violent and furious speeches against the aristocrats, the others became doubly prejudiced against reform of every description, and all who attempted to assert its propriety. After all, had this political ferment broke out in Britain at any other period, or on any other occasion, it would have probably passed away like other heart-burnings of the same description, which interest for a time, but weary out the public attention, and are laid aside and forgotten. But the French Revolution blazed in the neighbourhood like a beacon of hope to the one party, of fear and caution to the other. The shouts of the democratic triumphs — the foul means by which their successes were ob-

tained, and the cruel use which was made of them, increased the animosity of both parties in England. In the fury of party zeal, the democrats excused many of the excesses of the French Revolution, in respects of its tendency; while the other party, in condemning the whole Revolution, both root and branch, forgot that, after all, the struggle of the French nation to recover their liberty, was, in its commencement, not only justifiable, but laudable.

The wild and inflated language addressed by the French statesmen to mankind in general, and the spirit of conquest which the nation had lately evinced, mixed with their marked desire to extend their political principles, and with the odium which they had heaped upon themselves by the King's death, made the whole aristocratic party, commanding a very large majority in both Houses of Parliament, become urgent that war should be declared against France; a holy war, it was said, against treason, blasphemy, and murder, and a necessary war, in order to break off all connexion betwixt the French government and the discontented part of our own subjects, who could not otherwise be prevented from the most close, constant, and dangerous intercourse with them.

Another reason for hostilities, more in parallel with similar cases in history, occurred, from

the French having, by a formal decree, proclaimed the Scheldt navigable. In so doing, a point had been assumed as granted, upon the denial of which the States of Holland had always rested as the very basis of their national prosperity. It is probable that this might, in other circumstances, have been made the subject of negotiation. But the difference of opinion on the general politics of the Revolution, and the mode in which it had been carried on, set the governments of France and England in such direct and mortal opposition to each other, that war became inevitable.

Lord Gower, the British ambasssador, was recalled from Paris, immediately on the King's execution. The prince to whom he was sent was no more; and, on the same ground, the French envoy at the Court of St James's, though not dismissed by his Majesty's government, was made acquainted that the ministers no longer considered him as an accredited person. Yet, through Maret, a subordinate agent, Pitt continued to keep up some correspondence with the French government, in a lingering desire to preserve peace, if possible. What the British minister chiefly wished was, to have satisfactory assurances that the strong expressions of a decree, which the French Convention had passed on the 19th November, were not to be considered as applicable

to England. The decree was in these words: "The National Convention declares, in the name of the French nation, that it will grant fraternity and assistance to all people who wish to recover their liberty; and it charges the executive power to send the necessary orders to the generals, to give succours to such people, and to defend those citizens who have suffered, or may suffer, in the cause of liberty." — That this decree might not remain a secret to those for whose benefit it was intended, a translation of it, in every foreign language, was ordered to be printed.*) The Convention, as well as the ministers of France, refused every disavowal of the decree as applicable to Great Britain; were equally reluctant to grant explanation of any kind on the opening of the Scheldt; and finally, without one dissentient voice, the whole Convention, in a full meeting, declared war upon England; — which last nation is, nevertheless, sometimes represented, even at this day, as having declared war upon France.

In fact, Mr Pitt came unwillingly into the war. With even more than his great father's ministerial talents, he did not habitually nourish the schemes of military triumph which were

*) Annual Register for 1793, p. 153.

familiar to the genius of Chatham, and was naturally unwilling, by engaging in an expensive war, to derange those plans of finance by which he had retrieved the revenues of Great Britain from a very low condition. It is said of Chatham, that he considered it as the best economy, to make every military expedition which he fitted out, of such a power and strength, as to overbear, as far as possible, all chance of opposition. A general officer, who was to be employed in such a piece of service, having demanded a certain body of troops as sufficient to effect his purpose, "Take double the number," said Lord Chatham, "and answer with your head for your success." His son had not the same mode of computation, and would perhaps have been more willing to have reduced the officer's terms, chaffered with him for the lowest number, and finally dispatched him at the head of as small a body as the general could have been prevailed on to consider as affording any prospect of success. This untimely economy of resources arose from the expense attending the British army. They are certainly one of the bravest, best appointed, and most liberally paid in Europe; but in forming demands on their valour, and expectations from their exertions, their fellow-subjects are apt to indulge extravagant computations, from not being in the habit of considering military calculations,

or being altogether aware of the numerical superiority possessed by other countries. That one Englishman will fight two Frenchmen is certain; but that he will beat them, though a good article of the popular creed, must be allowed to be more dubious; and it is not wise to wage war on such odds, or to suppose that, because our soldiers are infinitely valuable to us, and a little expensive besides, it is therefore judicious to send them in small numbers against desperate odds.

Another point, well touched by Sheridan, on the debate on the question of peace or war, was not sufficiently attended to by the British administration. That statesman, whose perception of the right and wrong of any great constitutional question was as acute as that of any whomsoever of his great political contemporaries, said, "He wished every possible exertion to be made for the preservation of peace. If, however, that were impracticable, in such case, but in such case only, he proposed to vote for a vigorous war. Not a war of shifts and scraps, of timid operation, or protracted effort; but a war conducted with such energy as might convince the world that we were contending for our dearest and most valuable privileges." *)

*) Annual Register for 1793, p. 250.

Of this high-spirited and most just principle, the policy of Britain unfortunately lost sight during the first years of the war, when there occurred more than one opportunity in which a home and prostrating blow might have been aimed at her gigantic adversary.

A gallant auxiliary army was, however, immediately fitted out, and embarked for Holland, with his Royal Highness the Duke of York at their head, as if the King had meant to give to his allies the dearest pledge in his power, how serious was the interest which he took in their defence.

But though well equipped, and commanded, under the young Prince, by Abercromby, Dundas, Sir William Erskine, and many other officers of gallantry and experience, it must be owned that the British army had not then recovered the depressing and disorganizing effects of the American war. The soldiers were, indeed, fine men on the parade; but their external appearance was acquired by dint of a thousand minute and vexatious attentions, exacted from them at the expense of private comfort, and which, after all, only gave them the exterior appearance of high drilling, in exchange for ease of motion and simplicity of dress. No general system of manœuvres, we believe, had been adopted for the use of forces; each com-

manding officer managed his regiment according to his own pleasure. In a field-day, two or three battalions could not act in concert, without much previous consultation; in action, they got on as chance directed. The officers, too, were acquainted both with their soldiers and with their duty, in a degree far inferior to what is now exacted from them. Our system of purchasing commissions, which is necessary to connect the army with the country, and the property of the country, was at that time so much abused, that a mere beardless boy might be forced at once through the subordinate and subaltern steps into a company or a majority, without having been a month in the army. In short, all those gigantic abuses were still subsisting, which the illustrious prince whom we have named eradicated from the British army, by regulations for which his country can never be sufficiently grateful, and without which they could never have performed the distinguished part finally destined to them in the terrible drama, which was about to open under less successful auspices.

There hung also, like a cloud, upon the military fame of England, the unfortunate issue of the American struggle, in which the advantages obtained by regulars, against less disciplined forces, had been trifled with in the commencement, until the genius of Washington, and

the increasing spirit and numbers of the continental armies, completely overbalanced, and almost annihilated, that original preponderance.

Yet the British soldiery did not disgrace their high national character, nor show themselves unworthy of fighting under the eye of the son of their monarch; and when they joined the Austrian army, under the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, gave many demonstrations both of valour and discipline. The storming the fortified camp of the French at Famars — the battle of Lincelles — the part they bore in the sieges of Valenciennes and Condé, both of which surrendered successively to the allied forces, upheld the reputation of their country, and amounted, indeed, to what in former wars would have been the fruits of a very successful campaign. But Europe was now arrived at a time when war was no longer to be carried on according to the old usage, by the agency of standing armies of moderate numbers; when a battle lost and won, or a siege raised or successful, was thought sufficient for the active exertions of the year, and the troops on either side were drawn off into winter quarters, while diplomacy took up the contest which tactics had suspended. All this was to be laid aside; and instead of this drowsy state of hostility, nations were to contend with each other like individuals in mortal con-

flict, bringing not merely the hands, but every limb of the body into violent and furious struggle. The situation of France, both in internal and external relations, required the most dreadful efforts which had been ever made by any country; and the exertions which she demanded, were either willingly made by the enthusiasm of the inhabitants, or extorted by the energy and severity of the Revolutionary government. We must bestow a single glance on the state of the country, ere we proceed to notice the measures adopted for its defence.

On the north-eastern frontier of France, considerable advances had been made by the English and Hanoverian army, in communication and conjunction with the Austrian force under the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg, an excellent officer, but who, belonging to the old school of formal and prolonged war, never sufficiently considered that a new description of enemies were opposed to him, who were necessarily to be combated in a different manner from those whom his youth had encountered, and who, unenterprising himself, does not appear either to have calculated upon, or prepared to counteract, strokes of audacity and activity on the part of the enemy.

The war on the Rhine was furiously maintained by Prussians and Austrians united. The French lost the important town of Mentz, were

driven out of other places, and experienced many reverses, although Custine, Moreau, Houchard, Beauharnois, and other general officers of high merit, had already given lustre to the arms of the Republic. The loss of the strong lines of Weissenburgh, which were carried by General Wurmser, a distinguished Austrian officer, completed the shade of disadvantage which here hung on the Republican banners.

In Piedmont, the French were also unsuccessful, though the scale was less grand and imposing. The Republican General Brunet was unfortunate, and he was forced from his camp at Belvidere; while, on the side of Savoy, the King of Sardinia also obtained several temporary advantages.

On the Pyrenees, the Republican armies had been equally unsuccessful. A Spanish army, conducted with more spirit than had been lately the case with the troops of that once proud monarchy, had defeated the Republican General Servan, and crossed the Bidassoa. On the eastern extremity of these celebrated mountains, the Spaniards had taken the towns of Port Vendre and Ollioulles.

Assailed on so many sides, and by so many enemies, all of whom, excepting the Sardinians, had more or less made impression upon the frontiers of the Republic, it might seem, that the

only salvation which remained for France, must have been sought for in the unanimity of her inhabitants. But so far was the nation from possessing this first of requisites for a successful opposition to the overpowering coalition which assailed her, that a dreadful civil war was already waged in the western provinces of France, which threatened, from its importance and the success of the insurgents, to undo in a great measure the work of the Revolution; while similar discords breaking out on different points in the south, menaced conclusions no less formidable.

It does not belong to us to trace the interesting features of the war in La Vendée with a minute pencil, but they mingle too much with the history of the period to be altogether omitted.

We have elsewhere said, that, speaking of La Vendée as a district, it was there alone, through the whole kingdom of France, that the peasants and the nobles, in other words the proprietors and cultivators of the soil, remained on terms of close and intimate connexion and friendship, which made them feel the same undivided interest in the great changes created by the Revolution. The situation of La Vendée, its soil and character, as well as the manners of the people, had contributed to an arrangement of interests and habits of thinking, which rendered the union betwixt these two classes indissoluble.

La Vendée is a wooded and pastoral country, not indeed mountainous, but abounding in inequalities of ground, crossed by brooks, and intersected by a variety of canals and ditches, made for drainage, but which become, with the numerous and intricate thickets, posts of great strength in the time of war. The inclosures seemed to be won, as it were, out of the woodland; and the paths which traversed the country were so intricate and perplexed, as to render it inaccessible to strangers, and not easily travelled through by the natives themselves. There were almost no roads practicable for ordinary carriages during the rainy season; and the rainy season in La Vendée is a long one. The ladies of rank, when they visited, went in carriages drawn by bullocks; the gentlemen, as well as the peasants, travelled chiefly on foot; and by assistance of the long leaping-poles, which they carried for that purpose, surmounted the ditches and other obstacles which other travellers found impassable.

The whole tract of country is about one hundred and fifty miles square, and lies at the mouth and on the southern bank of the Loire. The internal part is called Le Bocage (the Thicket), because partaking in a peculiar degree of the wooded and intricate character which belongs to the whole country. That portion of la Vendée

which lies close to the Loire, and nearer its mouth, is called Le Louroux. The neighbouring districts partook in the insurrection, but the strength and character which it assumed was derived chiefly from La Vendée.

The union betwixt the noblesse of La Vendée and their peasants, was of the most intimate character. Their chief exportations from the district consisted in the immense herds of cattle which they reared in their fertile meadows, and which supplied the consumption of the metropolis. These herds, as well as the land on which they were raised, were in general the property of the Seigneur; but the farmer possessed a joint interest in the latter. He managed the stock and disposed of it at market, and there was an equitable adjustment of their interests in disposing of the produce.

Their amusements were also in common. The chase of wolves, not only for the sake of sport, but to clear the woods of those ravenous animals, was pursued as of yore by the Seigneur at the head of his followers and vassals. Upon the evenings of Sundays and holidays, the young people of each village and *métairie* repaired to the court-yard of the chateau, as the natural and proper scene for their evening amusement, and the family of the Baron often took part in the pastime.

In a word, the two divisions of society depended mutually on each other, and were strongly knit together by ties, which, in other districts of France, existed only in particular instances. The Vendean peasant was the faithful and attached, though humble friend of his lord; he was his partner in bad and good fortune; submitted to his decision the disputes which might occur betwixt him and his neighbours; and had recourse to his protection, if he sustained wrong, or was threatened with injustice from any one.

This system of simple and patriarchal manners could not have long subsisted under any great inequality of fortune. Accordingly, we find that the wealthiest of the Vendean nobility did not hold estates worth more than twelve or fifteen hundred a-year, while the lowest might be three or four hundred. They were not accordingly much tempted by exuberance of wealth to seek to display magnificence; and such as went to court, and conformed to the fashions of the capital, were accustomed to lay them aside in all haste when they returned to the Bocage, and to reassume the simple manners of their ancestors.

All the incentives to discord which abounded elsewhere through France, were wanting in this wild and wooded region, where the peasant was

the noble's affectionate partner and friend, the noble the natural judge and protector of the peasant. The people had retained the feelings of the ancient French in favour of royalty; they listened with dissatisfaction and disgust to the accounts of the Revolution as it proceeded; and feeling themselves none of the evils in which it originated, its whole tendency became the object of their alarm and suspicion. The neighbouring districts, and Bretagne in particular, were agitated by similar commotions; for although the revolutionary principles predominated in the towns of the west, they were not relished by the country people any more than by the nobles. Great agitation had for some time taken place through the provinces of Bretagne, Anjou, Maine, and Poitou, to which the strength of the insurrection in La Vendée gave impulse. It was not, however, a political impulse which induced the Vendéans to take the field. The influence of religion, seconded by that of natural affection, was the immediate stimulating motive.

In a country so simple and virtuous in its manners as we have described La Vendée, religious devotion must necessarily be a general attribute of the inhabitants, who, conscious of loving their neighbours as themselves, are equally desirous, to the extent of their strength and

capacity, to love and honour the Great Being who created all. The Vendéans were therefore very regular in the performance of their prescribed religious duties; and their parish priest, or *curé*, held an honoured and influential rank in their little society, was the attendant of the sick-bed of the peasant, as well for rendering medical as religious aid; his counsellor in his family affairs, and often the arbiter of disputes not of sufficient importance to be carried before the Seigneur. The priests were themselves generally natives of the country, more distinguished for the primitive duty with which they discharged their office, than for talents and learning. The *curé* took frequent share in the large hunting parties which he announced from the pulpit, and after having said mass, attended in person with the fowling-piece on his shoulder. This active and simple manner of life rendered the priests predisposed to encounter the fatigues of war. They accompanied the bands of Vendéans with the crucifix displayed, and promised, in the name of the Deity, victory to the survivors, and honour to those who fell in the patriotic combat. But Madame La Roche-Jacquelein repels, as a calumny, their bearing arms, except for the purpose of self-defence.

Almost all these parish priests were driven from their cures by the absurd and persecuting

fanaticism of that decree of the Assembly, which, while its promoters railed against illiberality and intolerance, deprived of their office and of their livelihood, soon after of liberty and life, those churchmen who would not renounce the doctrines in which they had been educated, and which they had sworn to maintain. *) In La Vendée, as elsewhere, where the curates resisted this unjust and impolitic injunction of the legislature, persecution followed on the part of the government, and was met in its turn by violence on that of the people.

The peasants maintained in secret their ancient pastors, and attended their ministry in woods and desert; while the intruders, who were settled in the livings of the recusants, dared hardly appear in the churches without the protection of the National Guards.

So early as 1791, when Dumouriez commanded the forces at Nantes, and the districts adjacent, the flame of dissension had begun to kindle. That general's sagacity induced him to do his best to appease the quarrel by moderating betwixt the parties. His military eye detected in the inhabitants and their country an alarming scene for civil war. He received the slightest conces-

*) See vol. II. p. 262.

sions on the part of the parish priests as satisfactory, and appears to have quieted the disturbances of the country, at least for a time.

But in 1793, the same causes of discontent, added to others, hurried the inhabitants of La Vendée into a general insurrection of the most formidable description. The events of the 10th of August 1792, had driven from Paris a great proportion of the Royalist nobility, who had many of them carried their discontents and their counter-revolutionary projects into a country prepared to receive and adopt them.

Then followed the Conventional decree, which supported their declaration of war by a compulsory levy of three hundred thousand men throughout France. This measure was felt as severe by even those departments in which the revolutionary principles were most predominant, but was regarded as altogether intolerable by the Vendéans, averse alike to the republican cause and principles. They resisted its exaction by main force, delivered the conscripts in many instances, defeated the National Guards in others, and finding that they had incurred the vengeance of a sanguinary government, resolved by force to maintain the resistance which in force had begun. Thus originated that celebrated war, which raged so long in the very bosom of France, and threatened the stability of her government,

even while the Republic was achieving the most brilliant victories over her foreign enemies.

It is remote from our purpose to trace the history of these hostilities; but a sketch of their nature and character is essential to a general view of the Revolution, and the events connected with it.

The insurgents, though engaged in the same cause, and frequently co-operating, were divided into different bodies, under leaders independent of each other. Those of the right bank of the Loire were chiefly under the orders of the celebrated La Charette, who, descended from a family distinguished as commanders of privateers, and himself a naval officer, had taken on him this dangerous command. An early wandering disposition, not unusual among youth of eager and ambitious character, had made him acquainted with the inmost recesses of the woods, and his native genius had induced him to anticipate the military advantages which they afforded. In his case, as in many others, either the sagacity of these uninstructed peasants led them to choose for command men whose talents best fitted them to enjoy it, or perhaps the perils which environed such authority prevented its being aspired to, save by those whom a mixture of resolution and prudence led to feel themselves capable of maintaining their character when in-

vested with it. It was remarkable also, that in choosing their leaders, the insurgents made no distinction between the noblesse and the inferior ranks. Names renowned in ancient history — Talmont, D'Autichamp, L'Escure, and La Roche-Jacquelein, were joined in equal command with the gamekeeper Stoflet; Cathelineau, an itinerant wool - merchant; La Charette, a roturier of slight pretensions; and others of the lowest order, whom the time and the public voice called into command, but who, nevertheless, do not seem, in general, to have considered their official command as altering the natural distinction of their rank in society. *) In their success, they formed a general council of officers, priests, and others, who held their meetings at Chatillon, and directed the military movements of the different bodies; assembled

*) Madame La Roche-Jacquelein mentions an interesting anecdote of a young plebeian, a distinguished officer, whose habits of respect would scarce permit him to sit down in her presence. This cannot be termed servility. It is the noble pride of a generous mind, faithful to its original impressions, and disclaiming the merits which others are ready to heap on it.

them at pleasure on particular points, and for particular objects of service; and dispersed them to their homes when these were accomplished.

With an organization so simple, the Vendean insurgents, in about two months, possessed themselves of several towns and an extensive tract of country; and though repeatedly attacked by regular forces, commanded by experienced generals, they were far more frequently victors than vanquished, and inflicted more loss on the republicans by gaining a single battle, than they themselves sustained in repeated defeats.

Yet at first their arms were of the most simple and imperfect kind. Fowling-pieces, and fusees of every calibre, they possessed from their habits as huntsmen and fowlers; for close encounter they had only scythes, axes, clubs, and such weapons as anger places most readily in the hands of the peasant. Their victories, latterly, supplied them with arms in abundance, and they manufactured gunpowder for their own use in great quantity.

Their tactics were peculiar to themselves, but of a kind so well suited to their country and their habits, that it seems impossible to devise a better and more formidable system. The Vendean took the field with the greatest simplicity of military equipment. His scrip served as a

cartridge-box, his uniform was the country short jacket and pantaloons, which he wore at his ordinary labour; a cloth knapsack contained bread and some necessaries, and thus he was ready for service. They were accustomed to move with great secrecy and silence among the thickets and inclosures by which their country is intersected, and were thus enabled to choose at pleasure the most favourable points of attack or defence. Their army, unlike any other in the world, was not divided into companies, or regiments, but followed in bands, and at their pleasure, the chiefs to whom they were most attached. Instead of drums or military music, they used, like the ancient Swiss and Scottish soldiers, the horns of cattle for giving signals to their troops. Their officers wore, for distinction, a sort of chequered red handkerchief knotted round their head, with others of the same colour tied round their waist, by way of sash, in which they stuck their pistols. *)

*) The adoption of this wild costume, which procured them the name of *brigands*, from its fantastic singularity, originated in the whim of Henri La Roche-Jacquelein, who first used the attire. But as this peculiarity, joined to the venturous exposure of his per-

The attack of the Vendéans was that of sharpshooters. They dispersed themselves so as to surround their adversaries with a semicircular fire, maintained by a body of formidable marksmen, accustomed to take aim with fatal precision, and whose skill was the more dreadful, because, being habituated to take advantage of every tree, bush, or point of shelter, those who were dealing destruction amongst others, were themselves comparatively free from risk. This manœuvre was termed *s'égailler*; and the execution of it resembling the Indian bush-fighting, was, like the attack of the Red warriors, accompanied by whoops and shouts, which seemed, from the extended space through which they resounded, to multiply the number of the assailants.

When the Republicans, galled in this manner, pressed forward to a close attack, they found no enemy on which to wreak their vengeance; for the loose array of the Vendéans gave immediate

son, occasioned a general cry among the Republicans, of "Aim at the red handkerchief," other officers assumed the fashion to diminish the danger of the chief whom they valued so highly, until at length it became a kind of uniform.

passage to the head of the charging column, while its flanks, as it advanced, were still more exposed than before to the murderous fire of their invisible enemies. In this manner they were sometimes led on from point to point, until the regulars meeting with a barricade, or an *abbatis*, or a strong position in front, or becoming perhaps involved in a defile, the Vendéans exchanged their fatal musketry for a close and furious onset, throwing themselves with the most devoted courage among the enemy's ranks, and slaughtering them in great numbers. If, on the other hand, the insurgents were compelled to give way, a pursuit was almost as dangerous to the Republicans as an engagement. The Vendean, when hard-pressed, threw away his clogs, or wooden-shoes, of which he could make himself a new pair at the next resting-place, sprang over a fence or canal, loaded his fusee as he ran, and discharged it at the pursuer with a fatal aim, whenever he found opportunity of pausing for that purpose.

This species of combat, which the ground rendered so advantageous to the Vendéans, was equally so in case of victory or defeat. If the Republicans were vanquished, their army was nearly destroyed; for the preservation of order became impossible, and without order their extermination was inevitable, while baggage, am-

munition, carriages, guns, and all the material part, as it is called, of the defeated army, fell into possession of the conquerors. On the other hand, if the Vendéans sustained a loss, the victors found nothing on the field but the bodies of the slain, and the *sabots*, or wooden-shoes, of the fugitives. The few prisoners whom they made had generally thrown away or concealed their arms, and their army having no baggage or carriages of any kind, could of course lose none. Pursuit was very apt to convert an advantage into a defeat; for the cavalry could not act, and the infantry, dispersed in the chase, became frequent victims to those whom they pursued.

In the field, the Vendéans were courageous to rashness. They hesitated not to attack and carry artillery with no other weapons than their staves; and most of their worst losses proceeded from their attacking fortified towns and positions with the purpose of carrying them by main force. After conquest they were in general humane and merciful. But this depended on the character of their chiefs. At Machecoul, the insurgents conducted themselves with great ferocity in the very beginning of the civil war; and towards the end of it, mutual and reciprocal injuries had so exasperated the parties against each other, that quarter was neither given nor taken on either side. Yet until provoked by the extreme cruel-

ties of the Revolutionary party, and unless when conducted by some peculiarly ferocious chief, the character of the Vendéans united clemency with courage. They gave quarter readily to the vanquished, but having no means of retaining prisoners, they usually shaved their heads before they set them at liberty, that they might be distinguished, if found again in arms, contrary to their parole. A no less striking feature, was the severity of a discipline respecting property, which was taught them only by their moral sense. No temptation could excite them to pillage; and Madame La Roche-Jacquelin has preserved the following singular instance of their simple honesty: — After the peasants had taken the town of Bressuire by storm, she overheard two or three of them complain of the want of tobacco, to the use of which they were addicted, like the natives of moist countries in general. “What,” said the lady, “is there no tobacco in the shops?” — “Tobacco enough,” answered the simple-hearted and honest peasants, who had not learned to make steel supply the want of gold, — “tobacco enough; but we have no money to pay for it.”

Amidst these primitive warriors were mingled many gentlemen of the first families in France, who, Royalists from principle, had fled to La Vendée rather than submit to the dominion of

the Convention, or the Convention's yet more cruel masters. There were found many men, the anecdotes told of whom remind us continually of the age of Henri Quatre, and the heroes of chivalry. In these ranks, and almost on a level with the valiant peasants of which they were composed, fought the calm, steady, and magnanimous L'Escure, — D'Elbée, a man of the most distinguished military reputation, — Bonchamp, the gallant and the able officer, who, like the Constable Montmorency, with all his talent, was persecuted by fortune; — the chivalrous Henry La Roche Jacquelein, whose call upon his soldiers was — «If I fly, slay me — if I advance, follow me — if I fall, avenge me;» with other names distinguished *) in the roll of fame, and not the less so that they have been recorded by the pen of affection.

*) The Memoirs of Madame Bonchamp, and still more those of La Roche-Jacquelein, are remarkable for the virtues of the heart, as well as the talents, which are displayed by their authors. Without affectation, without vanity, without violence or impotent repining, these ladies have described the sanguinary and irregular warfare, in which they and those who were dearest to them

The object of the insurrection was announced in the title of The Royal and Catholic Army, assumed by the Vendéans. In their moments of highest hope their wishes were singularly modest. Had they gained Paris, and replaced the royal authority in France, they meditated the following simple boons: — 1. They had resolved to petition, that the name of La Vendée be given to the Bocage and its dependencies, which should be united under a separate administration, instead of forming, as at present, a part of three distinct provinces. — 2. That the restored Monarch would honour the Bocage with a visit. — 3. That in remembrance of the loyal services of the country, a white flag should be displayed from each steeple, and the King should add a cohort of Vendéans to his body guard. — 4. That former useful projects of improving the navigation of the Loire and its canals, should be perfected by the government. So little of selfish hope or ambition was connected with the public spirit of these patriarchal warriors.

were engaged for so long and stormy a period; and we arise from the perusal sadder and wiser, by having learned what the brave can dare, and what the gentle can endure with patience.

The war of La Vendée was waged with various fate for nearly two years, during which the insurgents, or brigands as they were termed, gained by far the greater number of advantages, though with means infinitely inferior to those of the government, which detached against them one general after another, at the head of numerous armies, with equally indifferent success. Most of the Republicans intrusted with this fatal command suffered by the guillotine, for not having done that which circumstances rendered impossible.

Upwards of two hundred battles and skirmishes were fought in this devoted country. The revolutionary fever was in its access; the shedding of blood seemed to have become positive pleasure to the perpetrators of slaughter, and was varied by each invention which cruelty could invent to give it new zest. The habitations of the Vendéans were destroyed, their families subjected to violation and massacre, their cattle houghed and slaughtered, and their crops burnt and wasted. One Republican column assumed and merited the name of the Infernal, by the horrid atrocities which they committed. At Pillau, they roasted the women and children in a heated oven. Many similar horrors could be added, did not the heart and hand recoil from the task. Without quoting any more special instances of

horror, we use the words of a Republican eye-witness, to express the general spectacle presented by the theatre of civil conflict.

“I did not see a single male being at the towns of Saint Hermand, Chantonay, or Herbiers. A few women alone had escaped the sword. Country-seats, cottages, habitations of whichever kind, were burnt. The herds and flocks were wandering in terror around their usual places of shelter, now smoking in ruins. I was surprised by night, but the wavering and dismal blaze of conflagration afforded light over the country. To the bleating of the disturbed flocks, and bellowing of the terrified cattle, was joined the deep hoarse notes of carrion crows, and the yells of wild animals coming from the recesses of the woods to prey on the carcasses of the slain. At length a distant column of fire, widening and increasing as I approached, served me as a beacon. It was the town of Mortagne in flames. When I arrived there, no living creatures were to be seen, save a few wretched women who were striving to save some remnants of their property from the general conflagration.” *)

Such is civil war; and to this pass had its

*) Les Memoires d'un Ancien Administrateur des Armées Republicaines.

extremities reduced the smiling, peaceful, and virtuous country, which we have described a few pages before.

It is no wonder, after such events, that the hearts of the peasants became hardened in turn, and that they executed fearful vengeance on those who could not have the face to expect mercy. We read, therefore, without surprise, that the Republican General Haxo, a man of great military talent, and who had distinguished himself in the Vendean war, shot himself through the head when he saw his army defeated by the insurgents, rather than encounter their vengeance.

During the superiority of the Vendéans, it may be asked why their efforts, so gigantic in themselves, never extended beyond the frontier of their own country; and why an insurrection, so considerable and so sustained, neither made any great impression on the French Convention, where they were spoken of only as a handful of brigands, nor on foreign nations, by whom their existence, far less their success, seems hardly to have been known? On the former subject, it is perhaps sufficient to observe, that the war of the Vendéans, and their mode of conducting it, so formidable in their own country, became almost nugatory when extended into districts of an open character, and affording high roads and plains, by which cavalry and artillery could act

against peasants, who formed no close ranks, and carried no bayonets. Besides, the Vendéans remained bound to their ordinary occupation — they were necessarily children of the soil — and their army usually dispersed after the battle was over, to look after their cattle, cultivate the plot of arable land, and attend to their families. The discipline of their array, in which mere good-will supplied the place of the usual distinctions of rank, would not have been sufficient to keep them united in long and distant marches, and they must have found the want of a commissariat, a train of baggage, field-pieces, a general staff, and all the other accompaniments of a regular army, which, in the difficult country of La Vendée, familiar to the natives, and unknown to strangers, could be so easily dispensed with. In a word, an army which, under circumstances of hope and excitation, might one day amount to thirty or forty thousand, and on the next be diminished to the tenth part of the number, might be excellent for fighting battles, but could not be relied on for making conquests, or securing the advantages of victory.

It is not but that a man of D'Elbée's knowledge in the art of war, who acted as one of their principal leaders, meditated higher objects for the Veudeans than merely the defence of their own province.

A superb prospect offered itself to them by a meditated attack on the town of Nantes. Upon the success of this attempt turned perhaps the fate of the Revolution. This beautiful and important commercial city is situated on the right bank of the Loire, which is there a fine navigable river, about twenty-seven miles from its junction with the sea. It is without fortifications of any regular description, but had a garrison of perhaps ten thousand men, and was covered by such hasty works of defence as time had permitted them to erect. The force of the Vendéans by which it was attacked, has been estimated so high as thirty or forty thousand men under D'Elbée, while the place was blockaded on the left bank by Charette, and an army of royalists equal in number to the actual assailants. Had this important place been gained, it would probably have changed the face of the war. One or more of the French princes might have resorted there with such adherents as they had then in arms. The Loire was open to succours from England, the indecision of whose cabinet might have been determined by a success so important. Bretagne and Normandy, already strongly disposed to the royal cause, would have, upon such encouragement, risen in mass upon the Republicans; and as Poitou and Anjou were already in possession of the Royal and Catholic

Army, they might probably have opened a march upon Paris, distracted as the capital then was by civil and foreign war.

Accordingly, *) the rockets which were thrown up, and the sound of innumerable bugle-horns, intimated to General Canclaux, who commanded the town, that he was to repel a general attack of the Vendéans. Fortunately for the infant republic, he was a man of military skill and high courage, and by his dexterous use of such means of defence as the place afforded, and particularly by a great superiority of artillery, he was enabled to baffle the attacks of the Vendéans, although they penetrated; with the utmost courage, into the suburbs, and engaged at close quarters the Republican troops. They were compelled to retreat after a fierce combat, which lasted from three in the morning till four in the afternoon. †)

*) 18th June 1793.

†) A picture by Vernet, representing the attack on Nantes, estimable as a work of art, but extremely curious in a historical point of view, used to be in the Luxembourg palace, and is probably now removed to the Louvre. The Vendéans are presented there in all their simplicity of attire, and devoted valour; the priests who attended them displaying

At different times after the failure of this bold and well-imagined attempt, opportunities occurred during which the allies, and the English government in particular, might have thrown important succours into La Vendée. The island of Noirmoutier was for some time in possession of the Royalists, when arms and money might have been supplied to them to any amount. Auxiliary forces would probably have been of little service, considering in what sort of country they were to be engaged, and with what species of troops they were to act. At least it would have required the talents of a Peterborough or a Montrose, in a foreign commander, to have freed himself sufficiently from the trammels of military pedantry, and availed himself of the peculiar qualities of such troops as the Vendéans, irresistible after their own fashion, but of a character the most opposite possible to the ideas of excellence entertained by a mere martinet.

But it is now well known, there was a division in the British cabinet concerning the mode of carrying on the war. Pitt was extremely unwil-

their crosses, and encouraging the assault, which is, on the other hand, repelled by the regular steadiness of the Republican forces.

ling to interfere with the internal government of France. He desired to see the Barrier of Flanders (so foolishly thrown open by the Emperor Joseph) again re-established, and he hoped from the success of the allied arms, that this might be attained, — that the French lust for attacking their neighbours might be ended — their wildness for crusading in the cause of innovation checked, and some political advances to a regular government effected. On the other hand, the enthusiastic, ingenious, but somewhat extravagant opinions of Windham, led him to espouse those of Burke in their utmost extent; and he recommended to England, as to Europe, the replacing the Bourbons, with the ancient royal government and constitution, as the fundamental principle on which the war should be waged. This variance of opinion so far divided the British counsels, that, as it proved, no sufficient efforts were made, either on the one line of conduct or the other.

Indeed, Madame La Roche-Jacquelein (who, however, we are apt to think, has been in some degree misled in her account of that matter) says, the only dispatches received by the Vendéans from the British cabinet, indicated a singular ignorance of the state of La Vendée, which was certainly near enough to Jersey and Guernsey, to have afforded the means of obtaining accurate

information upon the nature and principles of the Vendean insurrection.

The leaders of the Royal and Catholic Army received their first communication from Britain through a Royalist emissary, the Chevalier de Tinteniach, who carried them concealed in the wadding of his pistols, addressed to a supposed chief named Gaston, whose name had scarce been known among them. In this document they were required to say for what purpose they were in arms, whether in behalf of the old government, or of the constitution of 1791, or the principles of the Girondists? These were strange questions to be asked of men who had been in the field as pure Royalists for more than five months, who might have reasonably hoped that the news of their numerous and important victories had resounded through all Europe, but must at least have expected they should be well known to those neighbours of France who were at war with her present government. Assistance was promised, but in a general and indecisive way; nor did the testimony of Monsieur de Tinteniach give his friends much assurance that it was seriously proposed. In fact, no support ever arrived until after the first pacification of La Vendée. The ill-fated expedition to Quiberon, delayed until the cause of royalty was nigh hopeless, was at length undertaken, when its only conse-

quence was that of involving in absolute destruction a multitude of brave and high-spirited men. But on looking back on a game so doubtful, it is easy to criticise the conduct of the players; and perhaps no blunder in war or politics is so common, as that which arises from missing the proper moment of exertion.

The French, although more able to seize the advantageous opportunity than we, (for their government being always in practice something despotic, is at liberty to act more boldly, secretly, and decisively, than that of England,) are nevertheless chargeable with similar errors. If the English cabinet missed the opportunities given by the insurrection of La Vendée, the French did not more actively improve those afforded by the Irish rebellion; and if we had to regret the too tardy and unhappy expedition to Quiberon, they in their turn might repent having thrown away the troops whom they landed at Castlehaven, after the pacification of Ireland, for the sole purpose, it would seem, of surrendering at Balinamuck.

It is yet more wonderful, that a country whose dispositions were so loyal, and its local advantages so strong, should not have been made by the loyalists in general the centre of those counter-revolutionary exertions which were vainly expended on the iron eastern frontier, where the

fine army of Condé wasted their blood about paltry frontier redoubts and fortresses. The nobles and gentlemen of France, fighting abreast with the gallant peasants of La Vendée, inspired with the same sentiments of loyalty with themselves, would have been more suitably placed than in the mercenary ranks of foreign nations. It is certain that the late King, Louis XVIII., and also his present Majesty, were desirous to have exposed their persons in the war of La Vendée. The former wrote to the Duke d'Harcourt — "What course remains for me but La Vendée? — Who can place me there? — England — Insist upon that point; and tell the English ministers in my name, that I demand from them a crown or a tomb." If there were a serious intention of supporting these unfortunate Princes, the means of this experiment ought to have been afforded them, and that upon no stinted scale. The error of England through all the early part of the war, was an unwillingness to proportion her efforts to the importance of the ends she had in view.

Looking upon the various chances which might have befriended the unparalleled exertions of the Vendéans, considering the generous, virtuous, and disinterested character of those primitive soldiers, it is with sincere sorrow that we proceed to trace their extermination by the blood-thirsty ruffians of the reign of terror. Yet the course of

Providence, after the lapse of time, is justified even in our weak and undiscerning eyes. We should indeed have read with hearts throbbing with the just feelings of gratified vengeance, that La Charette or La Roche-Jacquelein had successfully achieved, at the head of their gallant adherents, the road to Paris — had broke in upon the Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, like Thalaba the Destroyer into the Dom-Daniel; and with the same dreadful result to the agents of the horrors with which these revolutionary bodies had deluged France. But such a reaction, accomplished solely for the purpose of restoring the old despotic monarchy, could not have brought peace to France or to Europe; nay, could only have laid a foundation for farther and more lasting quarrels. The flame of liberty had been too widely spread in France to be quenched even by such a triumph of royalty as we have supposed, however pure the principles and high the spirit of the Vendéans. It was necessary that the nation should experience both the extremes, of furious license and of stern despotism, to fix the hopes of the various contending parties upon a form of government, in which a limited power in the monarch should be united to the enjoyment of all rational freedom in the subject. We return to our sad task.

Notwithstanding the desolating mode in which

the Republicans conducted the war, with the avowed purpose of rendering La Vendée uninhabitable, the population seemed to increase in courage, and even in numbers, as their situation became more desperate. Renewed armies were sent into the devoted district, and successively destroyed in assaults, skirmishes, and ambuscades, where they were not slaughtered in general actions. More than a hundred thousand men were employed at one time in their efforts to subjugate this devoted province. But this could not last for ever; and a chance of war upon the frontiers, which threatened reverses to the Convention, compensated them by furnishing new forces, and of a higher description in point of character and discipline, for the subjection of La Vendée.

This was the surrender of the town of Mentz to the Prussians. By the capitulation, a garrison of near fifteen thousand experienced soldiers, and some officers of considerable name, were debarred from again bearing arms against the allies. These troops were employed in La Vendée, where the scale had already begun to preponderate against the dauntless and persevering insurgents. At the first encounters, the soldiers of Mentz, unacquainted with the Vendean mode of fighting, sustained loss, and were thought lightly of by the Royalists.*)

*) They punned on the word *Mayence* (Mentz),

This opinion of their new adversaries was changed, in consequence of a defeat near Chollet, more dreadful in its consequences than any which the Vendéans had yet received, and which determined their generals to pass the Loire with their whole collected force, leave their beloved Bocage to the axes and brands of the victors, and carry the war into Bretagne, where they expected either to be supported by a descent of the English, or by a general insurrection of the inhabitants.

In this military emigration the Royalists were accompanied by their aged people, their wives, and their children; so that their melancholy march resembled that of the Cimbrians or Helvetians of old, when, abandoning their ancient dwellings, they wandered forth to find new settlements in a more fertile land. They crossed the river near Saint Florent, and the banks were blackened with nearly a hundred thousand pilgrims of both sexes, and of every age. The broad river was before them, and behind them their burning cottages and the exterminating sword of the Republicans. The means of embarkation were few and precarious; the affright of the females

and said, the newly arrived Republicans were soldiers of *fayence* (potter's ware), which could not endure the fire.

almost ungovernable; and such was the tumult and terror of the scene, that, in the words of Madame La Roche-Jacquelein, the awe-struck spectators could only compare it to the day of judgment. Without food, directions, or organization of any kind — without the show of an army, saving in the front and rear of the column, the centre consisting of their defenceless families marching together in a mass — these indomitable peasants defeated a Republican army under the walls of Laval.

The garrison of Mentz, whose arrival in La Vendée had been so fatal to the insurgents, and who had pursued them in a state of rout, as they thought, out of their own country, across the Loire, were almost exterminated in this most unexpected defeat. An unsuccessful attack upon Granville more than counterbalanced this advantage, and although the Vendéans afterwards obtained a brilliant victory at Dol, it was the last success of what was termed the Great Army of La Vendée, and which well deserved that title, on more accounts than in its more ordinary sense. They had now lost, by the chances of war, most of their best chiefs; and misfortunes, and the exasperating feelings attending them, had introduced disunion, which had been so long a stranger to their singular association. Charette was reflected upon as being little willing to aid La Roche-Jac-

quelein ; and Stoflet seems to have set up an independent standard. The insurgents were defeated at Mons, where of three Republican Generals of name, Westerman, Marceau, and Kleber, the first disgraced himself by savage cruelty, and the other two gained honour by their clemency. Fifteen thousand male and female natives of La Vendée perished in the battle and the massacre which ensued.

But though La Vendée, after this decisive loss, which included some of her best troops and bravest generals, could hardly be said to exist, La Charette continued, with indefatigable diligence, and undaunted courage, to sustain the insurrection of Lower Poitou and Bretagne. He was followed by a division of peasants from the Marais, whose activity in marshy grounds gave them similar advantages to those possessed by the Vendéans in their woodlands. He was followed also by the inhabitants of Morbihan, called, from their adherence to royalism, the Little La Vendée. He was the leader, besides, of many of the bands called Chouans, a name of doubtful origin given to the insurgents of Bretagne, but which their courage has rendered celebrated. *) La Charette

*) Some derived it from *Chat-huant*, as if the insurgents, like owls, appeared chiefly at

himself, who, with these and other forces, continued to sustain the standard of royalty in Bretagne and Poitou, was one of those extraordinary characters, made to shine amidst difficulties and dangers. As prudent and cautious as he was courageous and adventurous, he was at the same time so alert and expeditious in his motions, that he usually appeared at the time and place where his presence was least expected and most formidable. A Republican officer, who had just taken possession of a village, and was speaking of the Royalist leader as of a person at twenty leagues' distance, said publicly, — "I should like to see this famous Charette." — "There he is," said a woman, pointing with her finger. In fact, he was at that moment in the act of charging the Republican troops, who were all either slain or made prisoners.

After the fall of Robespierre, the Convention made offers of pacification to La Charette, which were adjusted betwixt the Vendean chief and General Canclaux, the heroic defender of Nantes. The articles of treaty were subscribed in that place, which La Charette entered at the head of his

night — others traced it to *Chouin*, the name of two brothers, said to have been the earliest leaders of the Breton insurgents.

military staff, with his long white plume streaming in the wind. He heard with coldness shouts of welcome from a city, to which his name had been long a terror; and there was a gloom on his brow as he signed his name to the articles agreed upon. He certainly suspected the faith of those with whom he transacted, and they did not by any means confide in him. An armistice was agreed on until the Convention should ratify the pacification. But this never took place. Mutual complaints and recriminations followed, and the soldiers of la Charette and of the Republic began once more to make a petty war on each other.

Meantime, that party in the British cabinet which declared for a descent on France, in name and on behalf of the successor to the crown, had obtained the acquiescence of their colleagues in an experiment of this nature; but unhappily it had been postponed until its success had become impossible. The force, too, which composed this experimental operation, was unjudiciously selected. A certain proportion consisted of emigrants, in whom the highest confidence might be with justice reposed; but about two battalions of this invading expedition were vagrant foreigners of various descriptions, many or most of them enlisted from among the prisoners of war, who readily took any engagement to get out of captivity, with the mental resolution of breaking it

the first opportunity. Besides these imprudences, the purpose and time of executing a project, which, to be successful, should have been secret and sudden, were generally known in France and England before the expedition weighed anchor.

The event, as is universally known, was most disastrous: The mercenaries deserted to the Republicans as soon as they got ashore; and the unfortunate emigrants, who became prisoners in great numbers, were condemned and executed without mercy. The ammunition and muskets, of which a quantity had been landed, fell into the hands of the enemy; and what was worse, England did not, among other lighter losses, entirely save her honour. She was severely censured as giving up her allies to destruction, because she had yielded to the wishes which enthusiastic and courageous men had elevated into hope.

Nothing, indeed, can be more difficult, than to state the just extent of support which can prudently be extended by one nation to a civil faction in the bosom of another. Indeed, nothing short of success — absolute success — will prove the justification of such enterprizes in the eyes of some, who will allege, in the event of failure, that men have been enticed into perils, in which they have not been adequately supported; or of others, who will condemn such measures as

squandering the public resources, in enterprizes which ought not to have been encouraged at all. But in fair judgment, the expedition of Quiberon ought not to be summarily condemned. It was neither inadequate, nor, excepting as to the description of some of the forces employed, ill calculated for the service proposed. Had such reinforcements and supplies arrived while the Royalists were attacking Nantes or Grenoble, or while they yet held the island of Noirmoutier, the good consequences to the royal cause might have been incalculable. But the expedition was ill-timed, and that was in a great measure owing to those unfortunate gentlemen engaged, who, impatient of inactivity, and sanguine by character, urged the British ministry, or rather Mr Windham, to authorise the experiment, without fully considering more than their own zeal and courage. We cannot, however, go so far as to say, that their impatience relieved ministers from the responsibility attached to the indifferent intelligence on which they acted. There could be no difficulty in getting full information on the state of Bretagne by way of Jersey; and they ought to have known that there was a strong French force collected from various garrisons, for the purpose of guarding against a descent at Quiberon. *)

*) We can and ought to make great allowances

After this unfortunate affair, and some subsequent vain attempts to throw in supplies on the part of the English, La Charette still continued in open war. But Hoche, an officer of high reputation, was now sent into the disturbed districts, with a larger army than had yet been employed against them. He was thus enabled to form movable columns, which acted in concert, supporting each other when unsuccessful, or completing each other's victory when such was obtained. La Charette, after his band was almost

for national feeling; yet it is a little hard to find a well informed historian, like Monsieur Lacroix, gravely insinuate that England threw the unfortunate Royalists on the coast of Quiberon to escape the future burthen of maintaining them. Her liberality towards the emigrants, honourable and meritorious to the country, was entirely gratuitous. She might have withdrawn when she pleased a bounty conferred by her benevolence; and it is rather too hard to be supposed capable of meditating their murder, merely to save the expense of supporting them. The expedition was a blunder, but one in which the unfortunate sufferers contributed to mislead the British government.

entirely destroyed, was himself made prisoner. Being condemned to be shot, he refused to have his eyes covered, and died as courageously as he had lived. With him and Stoflet, who suffered a similar fate, the war of La Vendée terminated.

To trace this remarkable civil war, even so slightly as we have attempted the task, has carried us beyond the course of our narrative. It broke out in the beginning of March 1793, and La Charette's execution, by which it was closed, took place at Nantes, 29th March 1796. The astonishing part of the matter is, that so great a conflagration should not have extended itself beyond a certain limited district, while within that region it raged with such fury, that for a length of time no means of extinguishing it could be discovered.

We now return to the state of France in spring 1793, when the Jacobins, who had possessed themselves of the supreme power of the Republic, found that they had to contend, not only with the Allied Forces on two frontiers of France, and with the Royalists in the west, but also with more than one of the great commercial towns, which, with less inclination to the monarchical cause, than a general terror of revolutionary

measures, prepared for resistance after the proscription of the Girondists upon the 31st of May.

Bourdeaux, Marseilles, Toulon, and Lyons, had declared themselves against the Jacobin supremacy. Rich from commerce and their maritime situation, and, in the case of Lyons, from their command of internal navigation, the wealthy merchants and manufacturers of those cities foresaw the total insecurity of property, and in consequence their own ruin, in the system of arbitrary spoliation and murder upon which the government of the Jacobins was founded. But property, for which they were solicitous, though, if its natural force is used in time, the most powerful barrier to withstand revolution, becomes, after a certain period of delay, its most helpless victim. If the rich are in due season liberal of their means, they have the power of enlisting in their cause, and as adherents, those among the lower orders, who, if they see their superiors dejected and despairing, will be tempted to consider them as objects of plunder. But this must be done early, or those who might be made the most active defenders of property will join with such as are prepared to make a prey of it.

We have already seen that Bourdeaux, in which the Brissotines or Girondists had ventured to hope for a zeal purely republican, at once adverse to

Royalty and to Jacobin domination, had effectually disappointed their expectations, and succumbed with little struggle under the ferocious victors.

Marseilles showed at once her good will and her impotency of means. The utmost exertions of that wealthy city, whose revolutionary band had contributed so much to the downfall of the monarchy in the attack on the Tuileries, were able to equip only a small and doubtful army of about 3000 men, who were dispatched to the relief of Lyons. This inconsiderable army threw themselves into Avignon, and were defeated with the utmost ease, by the republican general Cartaux, despicable as a military officer, and whose forces would not have stood a single *egaillement* of the Vendean sharp-shooters. Marseilles received the victors, and bowed her head to the subsequent horrors which it pleased Cartaux, with two formidable Jacobins, Barras and Ferron, to inflict on that flourishing city. The place underwent the usual terrors of Jacobin purification, and was for a time affectedly called, "the nameless commune."

Lyons made a more honourable stand. That noble city had been subjected for some time to the domination of Chalier, one of the most ferocious, and at the same time one of the most extravagantly absurd, of the Jacobins. He was at the head of a formidable club, which was worthy

of being affiliated with the mother society, and ambitious of treading in its footsteps; and he was supported by a garrison of two revolutionary regiments, besides a numerous artillery, and a large addition of volunteers, amounting in all to about ten thousand men, forming what was called a revolutionary army. This Chalier was an apostate priest, an atheist, and a thorough-paced pupil in the school of terror. He had been created Procureur of the Community, and had imposed on the wealthy citizens a tax, which was raised from six to thirty millions of livres. But blood as well as gold was his object. The massacre of a few priests and aristocrats confined in the fortress of Pierre-Scize, was a pitiful sacrifice; and Chalier, ambitious of deeds more decisive, caused a general arrest of an hundred principal citizens, whom he served.

This sacrifice was prevented by the courage of the Lyonnois; a courage which, if assumed by the Parisians, might have prevented most of the horrors which disgraced the Revolution. The meditated slaughter was already announced by Chalier to the Jacobin Club. "Three hundred heads," he said, "are marked for slaughter. Let us lose no time in seizing the members of the departmental office-bearers, the presidents and secretaries of the sections, all the local authorities who obstruct our revolutionary measures.

Let us make one faggot of the whole, and deliver them at once to the guillotine."

But ere he could execute his threat, terror was awakened into the courage of despair. The citizens rose in arms and besieged the Hotel-de-Ville, in which Chalier, with his revolutionary troops, made a desperate, and for some time a successful, yet ultimately a vain defence. *) But the Lyonnois unhappily knew not how to avail themselves of their triumph. They were not sufficiently aware of the nature of the vengeance which they had provoked, or of the necessity of supporting the bold step which they had taken, by measures which precluded a compromise. Their resistance to the violence and atrocity of the Jacobins had no political character, any more than that offered by the traveller against robbers who threaten him with plunder and murder. They were not sufficiently aware, that, having done so much, they must necessarily do more. They ought, by declaring themselves Royalists, to have endeavoured to prevail on the troops of Savoy, if not on the Swiss, (who had embraced a species of neutrality, which, after the 10th of August, was dishonourable to their ancient reputation,) to send in all haste soldiery

*) 29th May 1793.

to the assistance of a city which had no fortifications or regular troops to defend it; but which possessed, nevertheless, treasures to pay their auxiliaries, and strong hands and able officers to avail themselves of the localities of their situation, which, when well defended, are sometimes as formidable as the regular protection erected by scientific engineers.

The people of Lyons vainly endeavoured to establish a revolutionary character for themselves, upon the system of the Gironde; two of whose proscribed deputies tried to draw them over to their unpopular and hopeless cause: and they inconsistently sought protection by affecting a republican zeal, even while resisting the decrees, and defeating the troops, of the Jacobins. There were undoubtedly many of Royalist principles among the insurgents, and some of their leaders were decidedly such; but these were not numerous or influential enough to establish the true principle of open resistance, and the ultimate chance of rescue, by a bold proclamation of the King's interest. They still appealed to the Convention as their legitimate sovereign, in whose eyes they endeavoured to vindicate themselves, and at the same time tried to secure the interest of two Jacobin deputies, who had countenanced every violence attempted by Chalier, that they might prevail upon them to represent their con-

duct favourably. Of course they had enough of promises to this effect, while Messrs Guathier and Nioche, the deputies in question, remained in their power; promises, doubtless, the more readily given, that the Lyonnois, though desirous to conciliate the favour of the Convention, did not hesitate in proceeding to the punishment of the Jacobin Chalier. He was condemned and executed, along with one of his principal associates, termed Reard.

To defend these vigorous proceedings, the unhappy insurgents placed themselves under the interim government of a council, who, still desirous to temporize and maintain the Revolutionary character, termed themselves «The Popular and Republican Commission of Public Safety of the Department of the Rhone and Loire;» a title which, while it excited no popular enthusiasm, and attracted no foreign aid, no ways soothed, but rather exasperated, the resentment of the Convention, now under the absolute domination of the Jacobins, by whom every thing short of complete fraternization was accounted presumptuous defiance. Those who were not with them, it was their policy to hold as their most decided enemies.

The Lyonnois had indeed letters of encouragement, and promised concurrence, from several departments; but no effectual support was ever

directed towards their city, excepting the petty reinforcement from Marseilles, which we have seen was intercepted and dispersed with little trouble by the Jacobin General Cartaux.

Lyons had expected to become the patroness and focus of an Anti-jacobin league, formed by the great commercial towns, against Paris and the predominant part of the Convention. She found herself isolated and unsupported, and left to oppose her own proper forces and means of defence, to an army of sixty thousand men, and to the numerous Jacobins contained within her own walls. About the end of July, after a lapse of an interval of two months, a regular blockade was formed around the city, and in the first week of August hostilities took place. The besieging army was directed in its military character by General Kellerman, who, with other distinguished soldiers, had now begun to hold an eminent rank in the Republican armies. But for the purpose of executing the vengeance for which they thirsted, the Jacobins relied chiefly on the exertions of the deputies they had sent along with the commander, and especially of the representative Dubois Crancé, a man whose sole merit appears to have been his frantic Jacobinism. General Precy, formerly an officer in the royal service, undertook the almost hopeless task of defence, and by forming redoubts on the most

commanding situations around the town, commenced a resistance against the immensely superior force of the besiegers, which was honourable if it could have been useful. The Lyonnois, at the same time, still endeavoured to make fair weather with the besieging army, by representing themselves as firm Republicans. They celebrated as a public festival the anniversary of the 10th of August, while Dubois Crancé, to show the credit he gave them for their republican zeal, fixed the same day for commencing his fire on the place, and caused the first gun to be discharged by his own concubine, a female born in Lyons. Bombs and red-hot bullets were next resorted to, against the second city of the French empire; while the besieged sustained the attack with a constancy, and on many parts repelled it with a courage, highly honourable to their character.

But their fate was determined. The deputies announced to the Convention their purpose of pouring their instruments of havoc on every quarter of the town at once, and when it was on fire in several places to attempt a general storm, "The city," they said, "must surrender, or there shall not remain one stone upon another, and this we hope to accomplish in spite of the suggestions of false compassion. Do not then be surprised when you shall hear that Lyons exists

no longer." The fury of the attack threatened to make good these promises.

In the meantime the Piedmontese troops made a show of descending from their mountains to the succour of the city, and it is probable their interference would have given a character of royalism to the insurrection. But the incursion of the Piedmontese and Sardinians was speedily repelled by the skill of Kellerman, and produced no effect in favour of the city of Lyons, except that of supporting for a time the courage of its defenders.

The sufferings of the citizens became intolerable. Several quarters of the city were on fire at the same time, immense magazines were burnt to the ground, and a loss incurred, during two nights' bombardment, which was calculated at two hundred millions of livres. A black flag was hoisted by the besieged on the Great Hospital, as a sign that the fire of the assailants should not be directed on that asylum of hopeless misery. The signal seemed only to draw the Republican bombs to the spot where they could create the most frightful distress, and outrage in the highest degree the feelings of humanity. The devastations of famine were soon added to those of slaughter; and after two months of such horrors had been sustained, it became obvious that farther resistance was impossible.

The military commandant of Lyons, Precy, resolved upon a sally, at the head of the active part of the garrison, hoping that, by cutting his way through the besiegers, he might save the lives of many of those who followed him in the desperate attempt, and gain the neutral territory of Switzerland, while the absence of those who had been actual combatants during the siege, might, in some degree, incline the Convention to lenient measures towards the more helpless part of the inhabitants. A column of about two thousand men made this desperate attempt. But pursued by the Republicans, and attacked on every side by the peasants, to whom they had been represented in the most odious colours by the Jacobin deputies, and who were stimulated besides by the hope of plunder, scarcely fifty of the devoted body reached, with their leader, the protecting soil of Switzerland. Lyons reluctantly opened her gates after the departure of her best and bravest. The rest may be described in the words of Horace, —

*«Barbarus heu cineres insistet victor, et urbem,
— — — dissipabit insolens.»*

The paralytic Couthon, with Collot D'Herbois, and other deputies, were sent to Lyons by the Committee of Public Safety, to execute the ven-

geance which the Jacobins demanded; while Dubois Crancé was recalled, for having put, it was thought, less energy in his proceedings than the prosecution of the siege required. Collot D'Herbois had a personal motive of a singular nature for delighting in the task intrusted to him and his colleagues. In his capacity of a playactor, he had been hissed from the stage at Lyons, and the door to revenge was now open. The instructions of this committee enjoined them to take the most satisfactory revenge for the death of Chalier, and the insurrection of Lyons, not merely on the citizens, but on the town itself. The principal streets and buildings were to be levelled with the ground, and a monument erected where they stood, was to record the cause; — "*Lyons rebelled against the Republic — Lyons is no more.*" Such fragments of the town as might be permitted to remain, were to bear the name of Ville Affranchie. It will scarce be believed, that a doom like that which might have passed the lips of some Eastern despot, in all the frantic madness of arbitrary power and utter ignorance, could have been seriously pronounced, and as seriously enforced, in one of the most civilized nations in Europe; and that in the present enlightened age, men who pretended to wisdom and philosophy, should have considered the labours of the architect as a proper subject of

punishment. So it was, however; and to give the demolition more effect, the impotent Couthon was carried from house to house, devoting each to ruin, by striking the door with a silver hammer, and pronouncing these words — „House of a rebel, I condemn thee in the name of the Law.” Workmen followed in great multitudes, who executed the sentence by pulling the house down to the foundations. This wanton demolition continued for six months, and is said to have been carried on at an expense equal to that which the superb military hospital, the Hotel des Invalides, cost its founder, Louis XIV. But Republican vengeance did not waste itself exclusively upon senseless lime and stone — it sought out sentient victims.

The deserved death of Chalier had been atoned by an apotheosis, executed after Lyons had surrendered; but Collot D’Herbois declared that every drop of that patriotic blood fell as if scalding his own heart, and that the murder demanded atonement. All ordinary process, and every usual mode of execution, was thought too tardy to avenge the death of a Jacobin proconsul. The judges of the revolutionary commission were worn out with fatigue — the arm of the executioner was weary — the very steel of the guillotine was blunted. Collot D’Herbois devised a more summary mode of slaughter. A

number of from two to three hundred victims at once were dragged from prison to the Place de Brotteaux, one of the largest squares in Lyons, and there subjected to a fire of grape-shot. Efficacious as this mode of execution may seem, it was neither speedy nor merciful. The sufferers fell to the ground like singed flies, mutilated but not slain, and imploring their executioners to dispatch them speedily. This was done with sabres and bayonets, and with such haste and zeal, that some of the jailors and assistants were slain along with those whom they had assisted in dragging to death; and the mistake was not discerned, until, upon counting the dead bodies, the military murderers found them amount to more than the destined tale. The bodies of the dead were thrown into the Rhone, to carry news of the Republican vengeance, as Collot d'Herbois expressed himself, to Toulon, then also in a state of revolt. But the sullen stream rejected the office imposed on it, and heaved back the dead in heaps upon the banks; and the Committee of Representatives was compelled at length to allow the relics of their cruelty to be interred, to prevent the risk of contagion.

The people of the south of France have always been distinguished by the vivacity of their temperament. As cruelties beget retaliation, it may be as well here mentioned, that upon the fall of the

Jacobins, the people of Lyons forgot not what indeed was calculated for eternal remembrance, and took by violence a severe and sanguinary vengeance on those who had been accessory to the atrocities of Couthon and Collot d'Herbois. They rose on the Jacobins after the fall of Robespierre, and put to death several of them.

Toulon, important by its port, its arsenals, and naval-yard, as well as by its fortifications both on the sea and land side, had partaken deeply in the feelings which pervaded Marseilles, Bourdeaux, and Lyons. But the insurgents of Toulon were determinedly royalist. The place had been for some time subjected to the administration of a Jacobin Club, and had seen the usual quantity of murders and excesses with the greater pain, that the town contained many naval officers and others who had served under the King, and retained their affection for the royal cause. Their dissatisfaction did not escape the notice of men, to whom every sullen look was cause of suspicion, and the slightest cause of suspicion a ground of death. The town being threatened with a complete purification after the Jacobin fashion, the inhabitants resolved to anticipate the blow.

At the dead of night the tocsin was sounded by the citizens, who dispersed the Jacobin Club, seized on the two representatives who had governed

its proceedings, arrested seven or eight Jacobins, who had been most active in the previous assassinations, and, in spite of some opposition, actually executed them. With more decision than the inhabitants of Lyons, they proceeded to proclaim Louis XVII. under the constitution of 1791. Cartaux presently marched upon the insurgent city, driving before him the Marseillois, whom, as before-mentioned, he had defeated upon their march towards Lyons. Alarmed at this movement, and destitute of a garrison which they could trust, the Toulonnois implored the assistance of the English and Spanish Admirals, Lord Hood and Langara, who were cruising off their port. It was instantly granted, and marines were sent on shore for their immediate protection, while efforts were made to collect from the different allied powers such a supply of troops, as could be immediately thrown into the place. But the event of the siege of Toulon brings our general historical sketch into connexion with the life of that wonderful person, whose actions we have undertaken to record. It was during this siege that the light was first distinguished, which, broadening more and more, and blazing brighter and brighter, was at length to fill with its lustre the whole hemisphere of Europe, and was then to set with a rapidity equal to that with which it had arisen.

Ere, however, we produce this first-rate actor upon the stage, we must make the reader still more particularly acquainted with the spirit of the scene.

CHAPTER XVI.

Views of the British Cabinet regarding the French Revolution. — Extraordinary Situation of France. — Explanation of the Anomaly which it exhibited. — System of Terror. — Committee of Public Safety. — Of Public Security. — David the Painter. — Law against suspected Persons. — Revolutionary Tribunal. — Effects of the Emigration of the Princes and Nobles. — Causes of the Passiveness of the French People under the Tyranny of the Jacobins. — Singular Address of the Committee of Public Safety. — General Reflections.

It has been a maxim with great statesmen, that evil governments must end by becoming their own destruction, according to the maxim, *Res nolunt diu male administrari*. Pitt himself was of opinion, that the fury of the French Revolution would wear itself out; and that it already presented so few of the advantages and privileges of social

compact, that it seemed as if its political elements must either altogether dissolve, or assume a new form more similar to that on which all other states and governments rest their stability. It was on this account that this great English statesman declined assisting, in plain and open terms, the royal cause, and desired to keep England free from any pledge concerning the future state of government in France, aware of the danger of involving her in any declared and avowed interference with the right of a people to choose their own system. However anxious to prevent the revolutionary opinions, as well as arms, from extending beyond their own frontier, it was thought in the British cabinet, by one large party, that the present frantic excess of republican principles must, of itself, produce a reaction in favour of more moderate sentiments. Some steady system for the protection of life and property, was, it was said, essential to the very existence of society. The French nation must assume such, and renounce the prosecution of those revolutionary doctrines, for the sake of their own as well as of other countries. The arrangement must, it was thought, take place, from the inevitable course of human affairs, which, however they may fluctuate, are uniformly determined at length by the interest of the parties concerned.

Such was the principle assumed by many great

statesmen, whose sagacity was unhappily baffled by the event. In fact, it was calculating upon the actions and personal exertions of a raving madman, as if he had been under the regulation of his senses, and acting upon principles of self-regard and self-preservation. France continued not only to subsist, but to be victorious, without a government, unless the Revolutionary Committees and Jacobin Clubs could be accounted such — for the Convention was sunk into a mere engine of that party, and sanctioned whatever they proposed; without religion, which, as we shall see, they formally abolished; without municipal laws or rights, except that any one of the ruling party might do what mischief he would, while citizens, less distinguished for patriotism, were subjected, for any cause, or no cause, to loss of liberty, property, and life itself; without military discipline, for officers might be dragged from their regiments, and generals from their armies, on the information of their own soldiers; without revenues of state, for the depression of the assignats was extreme; without laws, for there were no ordinary tribunals left to appeal to; without colonies, ships, manufactories, or commerce; without fine arts, any more than those which were useful; — In short, France continued to subsist, and to achieve victories, although ap-

parently forsaken of God, and deprived of all the ordinary resources of human wisdom.

The whole system of society, indeed, appeared only to retain some appearances of cohesion from mere habit, the same which makes trained horses draw up in something like order, even without their riders, if the trumpet is sounded. And yet in foreign wars, notwithstanding the deplorable state of the interior, the Republic was not only occasionally, but permanently and triumphantly victorious. She was like the champion in Berni's romance, who was so delicately sliced asunder by one of the Paladins, that he went on fighting, and slew other warriors, without discovering for a length of time that he was himself killed.

All this extraordinary energy, was, in one word, the effect of TERROR. Death — a grave — are sounds which awaken the strongest efforts in those whom they menace. There was never anywhere, save in France during this melancholy period, so awful a comment on the expression of Scripture, "All that a man hath he will give for his life." Force, immediate and irresistible force, was the only logic used by the government — Death was the only appeal from their authority — the guillotine the all-sufficing argument, which settled each debate betwixt them and the governed.

Was the exchequer low, the guillotine filled it

with the effects of the wealthy, who were judged aristocratical in exact proportion to the extent of their property. Were these supplies insufficient, diminished as they were by speculation ere they reached the public coffers, the assignats remained, which might be multiplied to any quantity. Did the paper medium of circulation fall in the market to fifty under the hundred, the guillotine was ready to punish those who refused to exchange it at par. A few examples of such jobbers in the public funds made men glad to give one hundred francs for state money, which they knew to be worth no more than fifty. Was bread wanting, corn was to be found by the same compendious means, and distributed among the Parisians, as among the ancient citizens of Rome, at a regulated price. The guillotine was a key to storehouses, barns, and granaries.

Did the army want recruits, the guillotine was ready to exterminate all conscripts who should hesitate to march. On the generals of the Republican army, this decisive argument, which, *à priori*, might have been deemed less applicable in all its rigour, to them than to others, was possessed of the most exclusive authority. They were beheaded for want of success, which may seem less different from the common course of affairs; *) but they were also guillotined when

*) The fate of Custine illustrates this, — a

their successes were not improved to the full expectations of their masters. *) Nay they were guillotined, when, being too successful, they were suspected of having acquired over the soldiers who had conquered under them, an interest dangerous to those who had the command of this all-sufficing reason of state. **) Even mere mediocrity, and a limited but regular discharge of duty, neither so brilliant as to incur jealousy, nor so important as to draw down censure, was no protection. ***) There was no rallying point

general who had done much for the Republic, and who, when his fortune began to fail him, excused himself by saying, Fortune was a woman, and his hairs were growing grey.

*) Witness Houchard, who performed the distinguished service of raising the siege of Dunkirk, and who, during his trial, could be hardly made to understand that he was to suffer for not carrying his victory still farther.

**) Several generals of reputation sustained capital punishment, from no other reason than the jealousy of the committees of their influence with the army.

***) Luckner, an old German thick-headed

against this universal, and very simple system — of main force.

The Vendéans, who tried the open and manly mode of generous and direct resistance, were, as we have seen, finally destroyed, leaving a name which will live for ages. The commercial towns, which, upon a scale more modified, also tried their strength with the revolutionary torrent, were successively overpowered. One can, therefore, be no more surprised that the rest of the nation gave way to predominant force, than we are daily at seeing a herd of strong and able-bodied cattle driven to the shambles before one or two butchers, and as many bull-dogs. As the victims approach the slaughser-house, and smell the blood of those which have suffered the fate to which they are destined, they may be often observed to hesitate, start, roar, and bellow, and intimate their dread of the fatal spot, and instinctive desire to escape from it; but the cudgels of their drivers, and the fangs of the mastiffs, seldom fail to compel them forward, slavering, and snorting, and trembling, to the destiny which awaits them.

soldier, who was of no party, and scrupulously obeyed the command of whichever was uppermost at Paris, had no better fate than others.

The power of exercising this tremendous authority over a terrified nation, was vested in few hands, and rested on a very simple basis.

The Convention had, after the fall of the Girondists, remained an empty show of what it had once some title to call itself, — the Representative Body of the French Nation. The members belonging to The Plain, who had observed a timid neutrality betwixt The Mountain and the Girondists, if not without talent, were without courage to make any opposition to the former when triumphant. They crouched to their fate, were glad to escape in silence, and to yield full passage to the revolutionary torrent. They consoled themselves with the usual apology of weak minds — that they submitted to what they could not prevent; and their adversaries, while despising them, were yet tolerant of their presence, and somewhat indulgent to their scruples, because, while these timid neutrals remained in their ranks, they furnished to the eye at least the appearance of a full Senate, filled the ranks of the Representative Body as a garment is stuffed out to the required size by buckram, and countenanced by their passive acquiescence the measures which they most detested in their hearts. It was worth the while of The Mountain to endure the imbecility of such associates, and even to permit occasionally some diffident opposition on their part, had it only

been to preserve appearances, and afford a show of a free assembly debating on the affairs of the nation. Thus, although the name of the National Convention was generally used, its deputies, carefully selected from the Jacobin or ruling party, were everywhere acting in their name, with all the authority of Roman proconsuls; while two-thirds of the body sate with submitted necks and padlocked lips, unresisting slaves to the minor proportion, which again, under its various fierce leaders, was beginning to wage a civil war within its own limited circle.

But the young reader, to whom this eventful history is a novelty, may ask in what hands was the real power of the government lodged, of which the Convention, considered as a body, was thus effectually deprived, though permitted to retain, like the apparition in Macbeth, —

“—— upon its baby brow the round
And type of sovereignty.”

France had, indeed, in 1792, accepted, with the usual solemnities, a new constitution, which was stated to rest on the right republican basis, and was of course alleged to afford the most perfect and absolute security for liberty and equality, that the nation could desire. But this constitution was entirely superseded in practice by the more compendious mode of governing by means of a

junto, selected out of the Convention itself, without observing any farther ceremony. In fact, two small Committees, vested with the full authority of the state, exercised the powers of a dictatorship; while the representatives of the people, like the senate under the Roman empire, retained the form and semblance of supreme sway, might keep their curule chairs, and enjoy the dignity of fasces and lictors, but had in their possession and exercise scarcely the independent powers of an English vestry, or quarter-sessions.

The Committee of Public Safety dictated every measure of the convention, or more frequently acted without deigning to consult the Legislative Body at all. The number of members who exercised this executive government fluctuated betwixt ten and twelve; and, as they were all chosen Jacobins, and selected as men capable of going all the lengths of their party, care was taken, by re-elections from time to time, to render the situation permanent. This body deliberated in secret, and had the despotic right of interfering with and controlling every other authority in the state; and before its absolute powers, and the uses which were made of them, the Council of Ten of the Venetian government sunk into a harmless and liberal institution. Another Committee, with powers of the same revolutionary nature, and in which the members were also

renewed from time to time, was that of Public Security. It was inferior in importance to that of Public Safety, but was nevertheless as active within its sphere. We regret to record of a man of genius, that David, the celebrated painter, *) held a seat in the Committee of Public Security. The fine arts, which he studied, had not produced on his mind the softening and humanising effect ascribed to them. Frightfully ugly in his exterior, his mind seemed to correspond with the harshness of his looks. „Let us grind enough of the Red,” was the professional phrase of which he made use, when sitting down to the bloody work of the day.

That these revolutionary Committees might have in their hands a power subject to no legal defence or evasion on the part of the accused, Merlin of Douay, a lawyer, it is said, of eminence, framed what was termed the law against suspected persons, which was worded with so much ingenuity, that not only it enveloped every one who, by birth, friendship, habits of life, dependencies, or other ties, was linked, however distantly, with aristo-

*) David is generally allowed to have possessed great merit as a draughtsman. Foreigners do not admire his composition and colouring so much as his countrymen.

cracy, whether of birth or property, but also all who had, in the various changes and phases of the Revolution, taken one step too few in the career of the most violent patriotism, or had, though it were but for one misguided and doubtful moment, held opinions short of the most extravagant Jacobinism. This crime of suspicion was of the nature of theameleon; it derived its peculiar shade or colour from the person to whom it attached for the moment. To have been a priest, or even an assertor of the rights and doctrines of Christianity, was fatal; but in some instances, an overflow of atheistical blasphemy was equally so. To be silent on public affairs, betrayed a culpable indifference; but it incurred darker suspicion to speak of them otherwise than in the most violent tone of the ruling party. By a supplementary law, this spider's web was so widely extended, that it appeared no fly could be found insignificant enough to escape its meshes. Its general propositions were of a nature so vague, that it was impossible they could ever be made subjects of evidence. Therefore they were assumed without proof; and at length, definition of the characteristics of suspicion seems to have been altogether dispensed with, and all those were suspected persons whom the revolutionary committees and their assistants chose to hold as such.

The operation of this law was terrible. A suspected person, besides being thrown into prison, was deprived of all his rights, his effects sealed up, his property placed under care of the state, and he himself considered as civilly dead. If the unfortunate object of suspicion had the good fortune to be set at liberty, it was no security whatever against his being again arrested on the day following. There was, indeed, no end to the various shades of sophistry which brought almost every kind of person under this oppressive law, so ample was its scope, and undefined its objects.

That the administrators of this law of suspicion might not have too much trouble in seeking for victims, all householders were obliged to publish on the outside of their doors a list of the names and description of their inmates. Domestic security, the most precious of all rights to a people who know what freedom really is, was violated on every occasion, even the slightest, by domiciliary visits. The number of arrests which took place through France, choked the prisons anew which had been so fearfully emptied on the 2d and 3d of September, and is said to have been only moderately computed at three hundred thousand souls, one-third of whom were women. The Jacobins, however, found a mode of jail-delivery less summary than by direct massacre;

although differing so little from it in every other respect, that a victim might have had pretty nearly the same chance of a fair trial before Maillard and his men of September, as from the Revolutionary Tribunal. It requires an effort even to write that word, from the extremities of guilt and horror with which it recalls. But it is the lot of humanity to record its own greatest disgraces; and it is a wholesome and humbling lesson to exhibit a just picture of those excesses, of which, in its unassisted movements, and when agitated by evil and misguiding passions, human nature can be rendered capable.

The extraordinary criminal Court, better known by the name of the Revolutionary Tribunal, was first instituted upon the motion of Danton. Its object was to judge of state crimes, plots, and attempts against liberty, or in favour of royalty, or affecting the rights and liberty of man, or in any way, more or less, tending to counteract the progress of the Revolution. In short, it was the business of this Court to execute the laws, or inflict the sentence rather, upon such as had been arrested as suspected persons; and they generally saw room to punish in most of the instances where the arresting functionaries had seen ground for imprisonment.

This frightful Court consisted of six judges or public accusers, and two assistants. There were

twelve jurymen ; but the appointment of these was a mere mockery. They were official persons, who held permanent appointments ; had a salary from the state ; and were in no manner liable to the choice or challenge of the party tried. It may be sure the jurors and judges were selected for their Republican zeal and steady qualities, and were capable of seeing no obstacle either of law or humanity in the path of their duty. This tribunal had the power of deciding without proof, — or cutting short evidence when in the progress of being adduced, — or stopping the defence of the prisoners at pleasure ; privileges which tended greatly to shorten the forms of court, and aid the dispatch of business.

The Revolutionary Tribunal was in a short time so overwhelmed with work, that it became necessary to divide it into four sections, all armed with similar powers. The quantity of blood which it caused to be shed was something unheard of even during the proscriptions of the Roman Empire ; and there were involved in its sentences crimes the most different, personages the most opposed, and opinions the most dissimilar. When Henry VIII. roused the fires of Smithfield both against Protestant and Papist, burning at the same stake one wretch for denying the King's supremacy, and another for disbelieving the divine presence in the Eucharist,

the association was consistency itself compared to the scenes presented at the Revolutionary Tribunal, in which Royalist, Constitutionalist, Girondist, Churchman, Theophilantropist, Noble and Roturier, Prince and Peasant, both sexes and all ages, were involved in one general massacre, and sent to execution by scores together, and on the same sledge.

Supporting by their numerous associations the government as exercised by the Revolutionary Committees, came the mass of Jacobins, who, divided into a thousand clubs, emanating from that which had its meetings at Paris, formed the strength of the party to which they gave the name.

The sole principle of the Jacobinical institutions was to excite against all persons who had anything to lose, the passions of those who possessed no property, and were, by birth and circumstances, brutally ignorant, and envious of the advantages enjoyed by the higher classes. All other governments have made individual property the object of countenance and protection; but in this strangely inverted state of things, it seemed the object of constant suspicion and persecution, and exposed the owner to perpetual danger. We have elsewhere said that Equality (unless in the no less intelligible than sacred sense of equal submission to the law) is a mere

chimera, which can no more exist with respect to property, than in regard to mental qualifications, or personal strength, beauty, or stature. Divide the whole property of a country equally among its inhabitants, and a week will bring back the inequality which you have endeavoured to remove; nay, a much shorter space will find the industrious and saving richer than the idle and prodigal. But in France, at the period under discussion, this equality, in itself so unattainable, had completely superseded even the principle of liberty, as a watch-word for exciting the people. It was to sin against this leading principle to be possessed of, and more especially to enjoy ostentatiously, anything which was wanting to your neighbour. To be richer, more accomplished, better bred, or better taught, subjected you to the law of suspicion, and you were conducted instantly before a Revolutionary Committee, where you were probably convicted of incivism; not for interfering with the liberty and property of others, but for making what use you pleased of your own.

The whole of the terrible mystery is included in two regulations, communicated by the Jacobin Club of Paris to the Committee of Public Safety. — I. That when, by the machinations of opulent persons, seditions should arise in any district, it should be declared in a state of rebellion. —

II. That the Convention shall avail themselves of such opportunity *to excite the poor to make war on the rich*, and to restore order at any price whatsoever. — This was so much understood, that one of the persons tried by the Revolutionary Tribunal, when asked what he had to say in his defence, answered, — «I am wealthy — what avails it to me to offer any exculpation when such is my offence?»

The Committees of Government distributed large sums of money to the Jacobin Club and its affiliated societies, as being necessary to the propagation of sound political principles. The clubs themselves took upon them in every village the exercise of the powers of government; and while they sat swearing, drinking, and smoking, examined passports, imprisoned citizens, and enforced to their full extent the benefits of liberty and equality. «Death or Fraternity,” was usually inscribed over their place of assembly, which some one translated, — «Become my brother, or I will kill thee.”

These clubs were composed of members drawn from the lees of the people, that they might not, in their own persons, give an example contradicting the equality which it was their business to enforce. They were filled with men without resources or talents, but towards whom the confidence of the deceived people was directed, from

the conviction that, because taken from among themselves, they would have the interest of the lower orders constantly in view. Their secretaries, however, were generally selected with some attention to alertness of capacity; for on them depended the terrible combination which extended from the mother society of Jacobins in Paris, down into the most remote villager of the most distant provinces, in which the same tyranny was maintained by the influence of similar means. Thus rumours could be either circulated or collected with a speed and uniformity, which enabled a whisper from Robespierre to regulate the sentiments of the Jacobins at the most distant part of his empire; for his it unquestionably was, for the space of two dreadful years.

France had been subjected to many evils ere circumstances had for a time reduced her to this state of passive obedience to a yoke, which, after all, when its strength was fairly tried, proved as brittle as it was intolerable. Those who witnessed the tragedies which then occurred, look back upon that period as the delirium of a national fever, filled with visions too horrible and painful for recollection, and which, being once wiped from the mind, we recall with difficulty and reluctance, and dwell upon with disgust. A long course of events, tending each succes-

sively to disorganize society more and more, had unhappily prevented a brave, generous, and accomplished people from combining together in mutual defence. The emigration and forfeiture of the nobles and clergy had deprived the country at once of those higher classes, that right-hand file, who are bred up to hold their lives light if called on to lay them down for religion, or in defence of the rights of their country, or the principles of their own honour or conscience. Whatever may be thought of the wisdom or necessity of emigration, its evils were the same. A high-spirited and generous race of gentry, accustomed to consider themselves as peculiar depositaries of the national honour — a learned and numerous priesthood, the guardians of religious opinion — had been removed from their place, and society was so much the more weak and more ignorant for the want of them. Whether voluntarily abandoning or forcibly driven from the country, the expulsion of so large a mass, belonging entirely to the higher orders, tended instantly to destroy the balance of society, and to throw all power into the hands of the lower class, who, deceived by bad and artful men, abused it to the frightful excess we have described.

We do not mean to say that the emigrants had carried with them beyond the frontiers all

the worth and courage of the better classes in France, or that there were not, among men attached to the cause of liberty, many who would have shed their blood to have prevented its abuse. But these had been unhappily, during the progress of the Revolution, divided and subdivided among themselves, were split up into a variety of broken and demolished parties, which had repeatedly suffered proscription; and, what was worse, sustained it from the hand of each other. The Constitutionalist could not safely join in league with the Royalist, or either with the Girondist; and thus there existed no confidence on which a union could be effected, among materials repulsive of each other. There extended besides through France, far and near, that sorrow and sinking of the heart, which prevails amid great national calamities where there is little hope. The state of oppression was so universal, that no one strove to remedy its evils more than they would have struggled to remedy the *malaria* of an infected country. Those who escaped the disorder contented themselves with their individual safety, without thinking of the general evil as one which human art could remedy, or human courage resist.

Moreover, the Jacobinical rulers had surrounded themselves with such a system of espionage and delation, that the attempt to organise any

resistance to their power, would have been in fact to fall inevitably and fatally under their tyranny. If the bold conspirator against this most infernal authority did not bestow his confidence on a false friend or a concealed emissary of the Jacobin party, he was scarce the safer on that account; for if he breathed forth in the most friendly ear anything tending to reflect on the free, happy, and humane government under which he had the happiness to live, his hearer was bound, equally as a hired spy, to carry the purport of the conversation to the constituted authorities — that is, to the Revolutionary Committees or Republican Commissioners; and, above all, to the Committee of Public Safety. Silence on public affairs, and acquiescence in democratic tyranny, became, therefore, matter of little wonder; for men will be long mute, when to indulge the tongue may endanger the head. And thus, in the kingdom which boasts herself most civilised in Europe, and with all that ardour for liberty which seemed but of late to animate every bosom, the general apathy of terror and astonishment, joined to a want of all power of combination, palsied every effort at resistance. They who make national reflections on the French for remaining passive under circumstances so hopeless, should first reflect, that our disposition to prevent or punish crime, and our supposed

readiness to resist oppression, have their foundation in a strong confidence in the laws, and in the immediate support which they are sure to receive from the numerous classes who have been trained up to respect them, as protectors of the rich equally and of the poor. But in France the whole system of the administration of justice was in the hands of brutal force; and it is one thing to join in the hue and cry against a murderer, seconded by the willing assistance of a whole population — another to venture upon withstanding him in his den, he at the head of his banditti, the assailant defenceless, excepting in the justice of his cause.

It has further been a natural subject of wonder, not only that the richer and better classes, the avowed objects of Jacobin persecution, were so passively resigned to this frightful tyranny, but also why the French populace, whose general manners are so civilized and so kindly, that they are, on ordinary occasions, the gayest and best-humoured people in Europe, should have so far changed their character as to delight in cruelty, or at least to look on, without expressing disgust, at cruelties perpetrated in their name.

But the state of a people in ordinary times and peaceful occupations, is in every country totally different from the character which they manifest under strong circumstances of excitation. Rous-

seau says, that no one who sees the ordinary greyhound, the most sportive, gentle, and timid perhaps of the canine race, can form an idea of the same animal pursuing and strangling its screaming and helpless victim. Something of this sort must plead the apology of the French people in the early excesses of the Revolution; and we must remember, that men collected in crowds, and influenced with a sense of wrongs, whether real or imaginary, are acted upon by the enthusiasm of the moment; and are besides in a state of such general and undistinguishing fury, that they adopt, by joining in the clamours and general shouts, deeds of which they hardly witness the import, and which perhaps not one of the assembled multitude out of a thousand would countenance, were that import distinctly felt and known. In the revolutionary massacres and cruelties, there was always an executive power, consisting of a few well-breathed and thorough-paced ruffians, whose hands perpetrated the actions, to which the ignorant vulgar only lent their acclamations.

This species of assentation became less wonderful when instant slaughter, without even the ceremony of inquiry, had been exchanged for some forms, however flimsy and unsubstantial, of regular trial, condemnation, and execution. These served for a time to satisfy the public mind.

The populace saw men dragged to the guillotine, convicted of criminal attempts, as they were informed, against the liberty of the people; and they shouted as at the punishment of their own immediate enemies.

But as the work of death proceeded daily, the people became softened as their passions abated; and the frequency of such sacrifices having removed the odious interest which for a while attended them, the lower classes, whom Robespierre desired most to conciliate, looked on, first with indifference, but afterwards with shame and disgust, and at last with the wish to put an end to cruelties, which even the most ignorant and prejudiced began to regard in their own true, undisguised light.

Yet the operation of these universal feelings was long delayed. To support the reign of Terror, the Revolutionary Committees had their own guards and executioners, without whom they could not have long withstood the general abhorrence of mankind. All official situations were scrupulously and religiously filled up by individuals chosen from the Sans-Culottes, who had rendered themselves, by their zeal, worthy of that honourable appellation. Were they of little note, they were employed in the various capacities of guards, officers, and jailors, for which the times created an unwearied demand.

Did they hold places in the Convention, they were frequently dispatched upon commissions to different parts of France, to give new edge to the guillotine, and superintend in person the punishment of conspiracy or rebellion, real or supposed. Such commissioners, or proconsuls as they were frequently termed, being vested with unlimited power, and fresh in its exercise, signalized themselves by their cruelty, even more than the tyrants whose will they discharged.

We may quote, in illustration, a remarkable passage in an address by the Commissioners of Public Safety, to the representatives absent upon commissions, in which there occur some gentle remarks on their having extended capital punishment to cases where it was not provided by law, although the lustre of their services to the Republic far outshone the shade of such occasional peccadilloes. For their future direction, they are thus exhorted. "Let your energy awaken anew as the term of your labour approaches. The Convention charges you to complete the purification and reorganization of the constituted authorities with the least possible delay, and to report the conclusion of these two operations before the end of the next month. A simple measure may effect the desired purification. *Convoke the people in the popular societies — Let the public functionaries appear before them — Inter-*

rogate the people on the subject of their conduct, and let their judgment dictate yours." *) Thus, the wildest prejudices arising in the Jacobin Club, consisting of the lowest, most ignorant, most prejudiced, and often most malicious members in society, were received as evidence, and the populace declared masters, at their own pleasure, of the property, honour, and life, of those who had held any brief authority over them.

Where there had occurred any positive rising or resistance, the duty of the Commissioners was extended by all the powers that martial law; in other words, the rule of superior force, could confer. We have mentioned the murders committed at Lyons; but even these, though hundreds were swept away by volleys of musket-shot, fell short of the horrors perpetrated by Carrier at Nantes, who, in avenging the Republic on the obstinate resistance of La Vendée, might have summoned hell to match his cruelty, without a demon venturing to answer his challenge. Hundreds, men, women, and children, were forced on board of vessels which were scuttled and sunk in the Loire, and this was called republican baptism. Men and women were stripped, bound together, and thus thrown into the river, and this was called republican marriage. But we have

*) Moniteur, No. 995; Nivose l'an 2me, 25th December 1793.

said enough to show that men's blood seems to have been converted into poison, and their hearts into stone, by the practices in which they were daily engaged. Many affected even a lust of cruelty, and the instrument of punishment was talked of with the fondness and gaiety with which we speak of a beloved and fondled object. It had its pet name of the Little National Window, and others equally expressive; and although saints were not much in fashion, was, in some degree, canonized by the name of the Holy Mother Guillotine. That active citizen, the Executioner, had also his honours, as well as the senseless machine which he directed. This official was admitted to the society of some of the more emphatic patriots, and, as we shall afterwards see, shared in their civic festivities. It may be questioned whether even *his* company was not too good for the patrons who thus regaled him.

There was also an armed force raised among the most thorough-paced and hardened satellites of the lower order, termed by pre-eminence the Revolutionary Army. They were under the command of Roussin, a general every way worthy of such soldiers. These troops were produced on all occasions, when it was necessary to intimidate the metropolis and the National Guard. They were at the more immediate disposal of the Commune of Paris, and were a ready, though not a great force, which always could be produced at

a moment's notice, and were generally joined by the more active democrats, in the capacity of a Jacobin militia. In their own ranks they mustered six thousand men.

It is worthy of remark, that some of the persons whose agency was distinguished during this disgraceful period, and whose hands were deeply dyed in the blood so unrelentingly shed, under whatever phrenzy of brain, or state of a generally maddening impulse, they may have acted, nevertheless made amends in their after conduct for their enormities then committed. This was the case with Tallien, with Barras, with Fouché, Legendre, and others, who, neither good nor scrupulous men, were yet, upon many subsequent occasions, much more humane and moderate than could have been expected from their early acquaintance with revolutionary horrors. They resembled disbanded soldiers, who, returned to their native homes, often resume so entirely the habits of earlier life, that they seem to have forgotten the wild, and perhaps sanguinary character of their military career. We cannot, indeed, pay any of these reformed Jacobins the compliment ascribed to Octavius by the Romans, who found a blessing in the Emperor's benevolent government, which compensated the injuries inflicted by the Triumvir. But it is certain that, had it not been for the courage of Tallien and Barras in particular, it might have been much

longer ere the French had been able to rid themselves of Robespierre, and that the revolution of 9th Thermidor, as they called the memorable day of his fall, was in a great measure brought about by the remorse or jealousy of the Dictator's old comrades. But ere we arrive at that more suspicious point of our story, we have to consider the train of causes which led to the downfall of Jacobinism.

Periods which display great national failings or vices, are those also which bring to light distinguished and redeeming virtues. France unfortunately, during the years 1793 and 1794, exhibited instances of extreme cruelty, in principle and practice, which make the human blood curdle. She may also be censured for a certain abasement of spirit, for sinking so long unresistingly under a yoke so unnaturally horrible. But she has to boast that, during this fearful period, she can produce as many instances of the most high and honourable fidelity, of the most courageous and devoted humanity, as honour the annals of any country whatever.

The cruelty of the laws denounced the highest penalties against those who relieved proscribed fugitives. These were executed with the most merciless rigour. Madame Boucquey and her husband were put to death at Bourdeaux for affording shelter to the members of the Gironde

faction; and the interdiction of fire and water to outlawed persons, of whatever description, was enforced with the heaviest penalty. Yet, not only among the better classes, but among the poorest of the poor, were there men of noble minds found, who, having but half a morsel to support their own family, divided it willingly with a wretched fugitive, though death stood ready to reward their charity.

In some cases, fidelity and devotion aided the suggestions of humanity. Among domestic servants, a race whose virtues should be the more esteemed, that they are practised sometimes in defiance of strong temptation, were found many distinguished instances of unshaken fidelity. Indeed, it must be said, to the honour of the French manners, that the master and his servant live on a footing of much more kindliness than attends the same relation in other countries, and especially in Britain. Even in the most trying situations, there were not many instances of domestic treason, and many a master owed his life to the attachment and fidelity of a menial. The feelings of religion sheltered others. The recusant and exiled priests often found among their former flock the means of concealment and existence, when it was death to administer them. Often, this must have flowed from grateful recollection of their former religious services — sometimes

from unmingled veneration for the Being whose ministers they professed themselves. *) Nothing short of such heroic exertions, which were numerous, (and especially in the class where individuals, had pressed on account of their own

*) Strangers are forcibly affected by the trifling incidents which sometimes recall the memory of those fearful times. A venerable French ecclesiastic being on a visit at a gentleman's house in North Britain, it was remarked by the family, that a favourite cat, rather wild and capricious in his habits, paid particular attention to their guest. It was explained, by the priest giving an account of his lurking in the waste garret, or lumber-room, of an artizan's house, for several weeks. In this condition he had no better amusement than to study the manners and habits of the cats which frequented his place of retreat, and acquire the mode of conciliating their favour. The difficulty of supplying him with food, without attracting suspicion, was extreme, and it could only be placed near his place of concealment in small quantities, and at uncertain times. Men, women, and children, knew of his being in that place; there were rewards to be gained by discovery, life to be

wants, are often rendered callous to the distress of others,) could have prevented France, during this horrible period, from becoming an universal charnel-house, and her history an unvaried kalendar of murder.

lost by persevering in concealing him; yet he was faithfully preserved, to try upon a Scottish act, after the restoration of the Monarchy, the arts which he had learned in his miserable place of shelter during the reign of Terror. The history of the time abounds with similar instances.

CHAPTER XVII.

Marat, Danton, Robespierre. — Marat poniarded. — Danton and Robespierre become Rivals. — Commune of Paris — their gross Irreligion. — Gobet. — Goddess of Reason. — Marriage reduced to a Civil Contract. — Views of Danton — and of Robespierre. — Principal Leaders of the Commune arrested — and Nineteen of them executed. — Danton arrested by the influence of Robespierre — and, along with Camille Desmoulins, Westermann, and La Croix, taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal, condemned, and executed. — Decree issued, on the motion of Robespierre, acknowledging a Supreme Being. — Cecilie Regnaud. — Gradual Change in the Public Mind. — Robespierre becomes unpopular — Makes every effort to retrieve his power. — Stormy Debate in the Convention. — Collot D'Herbois, Tallien, etc. expelled from the Jacobin Club at the instigation of Robespierre. — Robespierre denounced in the Convention on the 9th Thermidor (27th July), and, after furious

struggles, arrested, along with his brother, Couthon, and Saint Just. — Henriot, Commandant of the National Guard, arrested. — Terrorists take Refuge in the Hotel-de-Ville — Attempt their own lives. — Robespierre wounds himself — but lives, along with most of the others, long enough to be carried to the Guillotine, and executed. — His character — Struggles that followed his Fate. — Final Destruction of the Jacobinal System — and return of Tranquillity. — Singular colour given to Society in Paris. — Ball of the Victims.

THE reader need not be reminded, that the three distinguished champions who assumed the front in the Jacobin ranks, were Marat, Danton, and Robespierre. The first was poniarded by Charlotte Corday, an enthusiastic young person, who had nourished, in a feeling betwixt lunacy and heroism, the ambition of ridding the world of a tyrant. Danton and Robespierre, reduced to a Duumvirate, might have divided the power betwixt them. But Danton, far the more able and powerful-minded man, could not resist temptations to plunder and to revel; and Robespierre, who took care to preserve proof of his rival's peculations, a crime of a peculiarly unpopular

character, and from which he seemed to keep his own hands pure, possessed thereby the power of ruining him whenever he should find it convenient. Danton married a beautiful woman, became a candidate for domestic happiness, withdrew himself for some time from state affairs, and quitted the stern and menacing attitude which he had presented to the public during the earlier stages of the Revolution. Still his ascendancy, especially in the Club of Cordeliers, was formidable enough to command Robespierre's constant attention, and keep awake his envy, which was like the worm that dieth not, though it did not draw down any indication of his immediate and active vengeance. A power, kindred also in crime, but more within his reach for the moment, was first to be demolished, ere Robespierre was to measure strength with his great rival.

This third party consisted of those who had possessed themselves of official situations in the Commune of Paris, whose civic authority, and the implement which they commanded in the Revolutionary army, commanded by Roussin, gave them the power of marching, at a moment's warning, upon the Convention, or even against the Jacobin Club. It is true, these men, of whom Hebert, Chaumette, and others, were leaders, had never shown the least diffidence of Robespierre, but, on the contrary, had used all

means to propitiate his favour. But the man whom a tyrant fears, becomes, with little farther provocation, the object of his mortal enmity. Robespierre watched, therefore, with vigilance, the occasion of overreaching and destroying this party, whose power he dreaded; and, singular to tell, he sought the means of accomplishing their ruin in the very extravagance of their revolutionary zeal, which shortly before he might have envied, as pushed farther than his own. But Robespierre did not want sense; and he saw with pleasure Hebert, Chaumette, and their followers, run into such inordinate extravagancies, as he thought might render his own interference desirable, even to those who most disliked his principles, most abhorred the paths by which he had climbed the power, and most feared the use which he made of it.

It was through the subject of religion that this means of ruining his opponents, as he hoped, arose. A subject, which one would have thought so indifferent to either, came to be on both sides the occasion of quarrel between the Commune of Paris and the Jacobin leader. But there is a fanaticism of atheism, as well as of superstitious belief; and a philosopher can harbour and express as much malice against those who persevere in believing what he is pleased to denounce as unworthy of credence, as an ignorant and bigoted

priest can bear against a man who cannot yield faith to dogmata which he thinks insufficiently proved. Accordingly, the throne being totally annihilated, it appeared to the philosophers of the school of Hebert, (who was author of the most gross and beastly periodical paper of the time, called the *Pere du Chene*,) that in totally destroying such vestiges of religion and public worship as were still retained by the people of France, there was room for a splendid triumph of liberal opinions. It was not enough, they said, for a regenerate nation to have dethroned earthly kings, unless she stretched out the arm of defiance towards those powers which superstition had represented as reigning over boundless space.

An unhappy man, named Gobet, Constitutional Bishop of Paris, was brought forward to play the principal part in the most impudent and scandalous farce ever acted in the face of a national representation.

It is said that the leaders of the scene had some difficulty in inducing the bishop to comply with the task assigned him, which, after all, he executed, not without present tears and subsequent remorse. But he did play the part prescribed. He was brought forward in full procession, to declare to the Convention, that the religion which he had taught so many years,

was, in every respect, a piece of priestcraft, which had no foundation either in history or sacred truth. He disowned, in solemn and explicit terms, the existence of the Deity to whose worship he had been consecrated, and devoted himself in future to the homage of Liberty, Equality, Virtue, and Morality. He then laid on the table his Episcopal decorations, and received a fraternal embrace from the President of the Convention. Several apostate priests followed the example of this prelate.

The gold and silver of the churches was seized upon and desecrated; processions entered the Convention, travestied in priestly garments, and singing the most profane hymns; while many of the chalices and sacred vessels were applied by Chaumette and Hebert to the celebration of their own impious orgies. The world, for the first time, heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization, and assuming the right to govern one of the finest of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity. For a short time the same mad profanity continued to be acted upon.

One of the ceremonies of this insane time stands unrivalled for absurdity, combined with impiety. The doors of the Convention were thrown open

to a band of musicians; preceded by whom, the members of the Municipal Body entered in solemn procession, singing a hymn in praise of liberty, and escorting, as the object of their future worship, a veiled female, whom they termed the Goddess of Reason. Being brought within the bar, she was unveiled with great form, and placed on the right hand of the President; when she was generally recognized as a dancing-girl of the Opera, with whose charms most of the persons present were acquainted from her appearance on the stage, while the experience of individuals was farther extended. To this person, as the fittest representative of that Reason whom they worshipped, the National Convention of France rendered public homage.

This impious and ridiculous mummary had a certain fashion; and the installation of the Goddess of Reason was renewed and imitated throughout the nation, in such places where the inhabitants desired to show themselves equal to all the heights of the Revolution. The churches were, in most districts of France, closed against priests and worshippers—the bells were broken and cast into cannon—the whole ecclesiastical establishment destroyed—and the Republican inscription over the cemeteries, declaring death to be perpetual sleep, announced to those who lived under that dominion, that they were to hope no redress even in the next world.

Intimately connected with these laws affecting religion, was that which reduced the union of marriage, the most sacred engagement which human beings can form, and the permanence of which leads most strongly to the consolidation of society, to the state of a mere civil contract of a transitory character, which any two persons might engage in, and cast loose at pleasure, when their taste was changed, or their appetite gratified. If fiends had set themselves to work to discover a mode of most effectually destroying whatever is venerable, graceful, or permanent in domestic life, and of obtaining at the same time an assurance that the mischief which it was their object to create should be perpetuated from one generation to another, they could not have invented a more effectual plan than the degradation of marriage into a state of mere occasional cohabitation, or licensed concubinage. Sophie Arnoult, an actress famous for the witty things she said, described the Republican marriage as the Sacrament of adultery.

These anti-religious and anti-social regulations did not answer the purpose of the frantic and inconsiderate zealots by whom they had been urged forward. Hebert and Chaumette had outrun the spirit of the time, evil as that was, and had contrived to get beyond the sympathy even of those, who, at heart as vicious and criminal as they,

had still the sagacity to fear, or the taste to be disgusted with, this overstrained tone of outrageous impiety. Perhaps they might have other motives for condemning so gross a display of irreligion. The most guilty of men are not desirous, generally speaking, totally to disbelieve and abandon all doctrines of religious faith. They cannot, if they would, prevent themselves from apprehending a future state of retribution; and little effect as such feeble glimmering of belief may have on their lives, they will not in general willingly throw away the slight chance, that it may be possible on some occasion to reconcile themselves to the Church or to the Deity. This hope, even to those on whom it has no salutary influence, resembles the confidence given to a sailor during a gale of wind, by his knowing that there is a port under his lee. His purpose may be never to run for the haven, or he may judge there is great improbability that by doing so he should reach it in safety; yet still, such being the case, he would esteem himself but little indebted to any one who should blot the harbour of refuge out of the chart. To all those, who, in various degrees, received and believed the great truths of religion, on which those of morality are dependant, the professors of those wild absurdities became objects of contempt, dislike, hatred, and punishment.

Danton regarded the proceedings of Hebert and his philosophers of the Commune with scorn and disgust. However wicked he had shown himself, he was too wise and too proud to approve of such impolitic and senseless folly. Besides, this perpetual undermining whatever remained of social institutions, prevented any stop being put to the revolutionary movements, which Danton, having placed his party at the head of affairs, and himself nearly as high as he could promise to climb, was now desirous should be done.

Robespierre looked on these extravagant proceedings with a different and more watchful eye. He saw what Hebert and his associates had lost in popularity, by affecting the doctrines of atheism and utter profaneness; and he imagined a plan, first for destroying these blasphemers, by general consent of the nation, as noxious animals, and then of enlarging, and, as it were, sanctifying his own power, by once more connecting a spirit of devotion of some modified kind or other with the revolutionary form of government, of which he desired to continue the head.

It has even been supposed, that Robespierre's extravagant success in rising so much above all human expectation, had induced him to entertain some thoughts of acting the part of a new Mahomet, in bringing back religious opinion into France, under his own direct auspices. He is said

to have countenanced in secret the extravagancies of a female called Catharine Theot, or Theos, an enthusiastic devotee, whose doctrines leaned to Quietisme. She was a kind of Joanna Southcote, and the Aaron of her sect was Dom Gerle, formerly a Carthusian monk, and remarkable for the motion he made in the first National Assembly, that the Catholic religion should be recognised as that of France*. Since that time he had become entirely deranged. A few visionaries of both sexes attended secret and nightly meetings, in which Theot and Dom Gerle presided. Robespierre was recognised by them as one of the elect, and is said to have favoured their superstitious doctrines. But whether the Dictator saw in them anything more than tools, which might be applied to his own purpose, there seems no positive authority to decide. At any rate, whatever religious opinions he might have imbibed himself, or have become desirous of infusing into the state, they were not such as were qualified to modify either his ambition, his jealousy, or his love of blood.

The power of Hebert, Chaumette, and of the Community of Paris, was now ripe for destruction. Roussin, with the other armed satellites of the revolutionary army, bullied indeed, and spoke

* Vol. I p. 261.

about taking the part of the magistracy of Paris against the Convention; but though they had the master and active ruffians still at their service, they could no longer command the long sable columns of pikes, which used to follow and back them, and without whose aid they feared they might not be found equal in number to face the National Guard. So early as 27th December 1793, we find Chaumette expressing himself to the Commune as one who had fallen on evil times and evil days. He brought forward evidence to show, that it was not he who had conducted the installation of the Goddess of Reason in his native city of Nevers; and he complains heavily of his lot, that the halls were crowded with women demanding the liberty of their husbands, and complaining of the conduct of the Revolutionary Societies. It was plain that a change was taking place in the political atmosphere, when Chaumette was obliged to vindicate himself from the impiety which used to be his boast, and was subjected besides to female reproach for his Republican zeal, in imprisoning and destroying a few thousand suspected persons.

The spirit of reaction increased, and was strengthened by Robespierre's influence now thrown into the scale against the Commune. The principal leaders in the Commune, many of whom seem

to have been foreigners, and among the rest the celebrated Anacharsis Clootz, were arrested.*

The case of these men was singular, and would have been worthy of pity had it applied to any but such worthless wretches. They were accused of almost every species of crime, which seemed such in the eyes of a Sans-Culotte. Much there was which could be only understood metaphysically, much there was of literal falsehood, but little or nothing like a distinct or well grounded accusation of a specific criminal fact. The charge bore, that they were associates of Pitt and Cobourg, and had combined against the sovereignty of the people—loaded them with the intention of starving thereby Paris—with that of ridiculing the Convention, by a set of puppets dressed up to imitate that scarce less passive Assembly—and much more to the same purpose, consisting of allegations that were totally unimportant, or totally unproved. But nothing was said of their rivalry to Robespierre, which was the true cause of their trial, and as little of their revolutionary murders, being the ground on which they really deserved their fate. Something was talked of pillage, at which Roussin, the commandant of the Revolutionary Army, lost all patience.

* 22d March 1794.

“Do they talk to me of pilfering?” he says. —
 “Dare they accuse such a man as I am of a theft of bed and body linen? Do they bring against me a charge of petty larceny—against *me*, who have had all their throats at my disposal?”

The accused persons were convicted and executed, to the number of nineteen. From that time the city of Paris lost the means of being so pre-eminent in the affairs of France, as her Commune had formerly rendered her. The power of the magistracy was much broken by the reduction of the Revolutionary Army, which the Convention dissolved as levied upon false principles, and as being rather a metropolitan than a national force, and one which was easily applied to serve the purposes of a party.

The Hebertists being removed, Robespierre had yet to combat and defeat a more formidable adversary. The late conspirators had held associations with the Club of Cordeliers with which Danton was supposed to have particular relations, but they had not experienced his support, which in policy he ought to have extended to them. He had begun to separate his party and his views too distinctly from his old friends and old proceedings. He imagined, falsely as it proved, that his bark could sail as triumphantly upon waves composed only of water, as on those of blood. He and others seem to have been seized with a

loathing against these continued acts of cruelty, as if they had been gorged and nauseated by the constant repetition. Danton spoke of mercy and pardon; and his partizan, Camille Desmoulins, in a very ingenious parody upon Tacitus, drew a comparison between the tyrants and informers of the French Jacobin government, and those of the Roman Imperial Court. The parallels were most ably drawn, and Robespierre and his agents might read their own characters in those of the most odious wretches of that odious time. From these aggressions Danton seemed to meditate the part which Tallien afterwards adopted, of destroying Robespierre and his power, and substituting a mode of government which should show some regard at least to life and to property. But he was too late in making his movement; Robespierre was beforehand with him; and, on the morning of the 31st of March, the Parisians and the members of the Convention hardly dared whisper to each other, that Danton, whose name had been as formidable as the sound of the tocsin, had been arrested like any poor ex-noble, and was in the hands of the fatal lictors.

There was no end of exclamation and wonder; for Danton was the great apostle, the very Mahomet of Jacobinism. His gigantic stature, his huge and ferocious physiognomy, his voice which struck terror in its notes of distant thunder, and the energies of talent and vehemence mingled, which

supplied that voice with language worthy of its deep tones, were such as became the prophet of that horrible and fearful sect. Marat was a madman, raised into consequence only by circumstances,—Robespierre a cold, creeping, calculating hypocrite, whose malignity resembled that of a paltry and second-rate fiend,—but Danton was a character for Shakspeare or Schiller to have drawn in all its broad lights and shades; or Bruce could have sketched from him a yet grander Ras Michael than he of Tigré. His passions were a hurricane, which, furious, regardless, and desolating in its course, had yet its intervals of sunshine and repose. Neither good by nature, nor just by principle or political calculation, men were often surprised at finding he still possessed some feelings of generosity, and some tendency even towards magnanimity. Early habits of profligate indulgence, the most complete stifler of human virtue, and his implication at the beginning of his career with the wretched faction of Orleans, made him, if not a worse, certainly a meaner villain than nature had designed him; for his pride must have saved him from much, which he yielded to from the temptations of gross indulgence, and from the sense of narrow circumstances. Still when Danton fell under Robespierre, it seemed as if the mousing-owl had hawked at and struck an eagle,

or at least a high-soaring vulture. His avowed associates lamented him of course; nay, Legendre and others, by undertaking his defence in the Convention, and arrogating for him the merit of those violent measures which had paved the way to the triumph of Jacobinism, showed more consistency in their friendship than these ferocious demagogues manifested on any other occasion.

Danton, before his fall, seemed to have lost much of his sagacity as well as energy. He had full warning of his danger from La Croix, Westermann, and others, yet took no steps either for escape or defence, though either seemed in his power. Still his courage was in no degree abated, or his haughty spirit tamed; although he seemed to submit passively to his fate with the disheartening conviction, which often unmans great criminals, that his hour was come.

Danton's process was, of course, a short one. He and his comrades, Camille Desmoulins, Westermann, and La Croix, were dragged before the Revolutionary Tribunal, a singular accomplishment of the prophecy of the Girondist, Boyer Fonfrede. This man had exclaimed to Danton, under whose auspices that engine of arbitrary power was established, "You insist, then, upon erecting this arbitrary judgment-seat? Be it so; and, like the tormenting engine devised by Pha-

laris, may it not fall to consume its inventors?" As judges, witnesses, accusers, and guards, Danton was now surrounded by those who had been too humble to aspire to be companions of his atrocities, and held themselves sufficiently honoured in becoming his agents. They looked on his unstooping pride and unshaken courage, as timid spectators upon a lion in a cage, while they still doubt the security of the bars, and have little confidence in their own personal safety. He answered, to the formal interrogatories concerning his name and dwelling, "My dwelling will be soon with annihilation — my name will live in the Pantheon of History." Camille Desmoulins, Herault les Sechelles, Fabre d'Eglantine, men of considerable literary talent, and amongst the few Jacobins who had any real pretension to such accomplishments, shared his fate. Westermann was also numbered with them, the same officer who directed the attack on the palace of the Tuileries on 10th August, and who afterwards was distinguished by so many victories and defeats in La Vendée, that he was called, from his activity, the scourge of that district.

Their accusation was, as in all such cases at the period, an olla podrida, if we can be allowed the expression, in which every criminal ingredient was mixed up; but so incoherently mingled and assembled together, so inconsistent

with each other, and so obscurely detailed in the charge and in the proof, that it was plain that malignant falsehood had made the gruel thick and slab. Had Danton been condemned for his real crimes, the doom ought, in justice, to have involved judges, jurors, witnesses, and most of the spectators in the court.

Robespierre became much alarmed for the issue of the trial. The Convention showed reviving signs of spirit; and when a revolutionary deputation demanded, at the bar, "that death should be the order of the day," and reminded them, that, "had they granted the moderate demand of three hundred thousand heads, when requested by the philanthropic, and now canonized Marat, they would have saved the republic the wars of La Vendée," they were received with discouraging murmurs. Tallien, the president, informed them, "that not death, but justice, was the order of the day," and the petitioners, notwithstanding the patriotic turn of their modest request, were driven from the bar with execrations.

This looked ill; but the power of Robespierre was still predominant with the Revolutionary Tribunal, and after a gallant, and unusually long defence, (of which no notice was permitted to appear in the *Moniteur*,) Danton and his associates were condemned, and carried to instant execution. They maintained their firmness, or

rather hardenedness of character, to the last; and when Danton observed Fabre d'Eglantine beginning to look gloomy, he cheered him with a play on words: "Courage, my friend," he said, in his deep, sullen tone of voice, "we are all about to take up your trade — *Nous allons faire des vers.*" The sufferers on this occasion, were men whose accomplishments and talents attracted a higher degree of sympathie, than that which had been given to the equally eloquent but less successful Girondists. Even honest men looked on the fate of Danton with some regret, as when a furious bull is slain with a slight blow by a crafty Tauridor; and many men of good feelings had hoped, that the cause of order and security might at least have been benefitted in some degree, by his obtaining the victory in a struggle with Robespierre. Those, on the other hand, who followed the fortunes of the latter, conceived his power had been rendered permanent, by the overthrow of his last and most formidable rival, and exalted in proportion. Both were deceived in their calculations. The predominance of such a man as Danton, might possibly have protracted the reign of Jacobinism, even by rendering it somewhat more endurable; but the permanent, at least the ultimate, success of Robespierre, was becoming more impossible, from the repeated decimations to which his jealousy

subjected his party. He was like the wild chief, Lope d'Aguirre, whose story is so well told by Southey, who, descending the great river Orrellana with a party of buccaneers, cut off one part of his followers after another, in doubt of their fidelity, until the remainder saw no chance for escaping a similar fate, unless by being beforehand with their leader in murder.

Alluding to Robespierre's having been the instrument of his destruction, Danton had himself exclaimed, "The cowardly poltroon! I am the only person who could have commanded influence enough to save him." And the event showed that he spoke with the spirit of prophecy which the approach of fate has been sometimes thought to confer.

In fact, Robespierre was much isolated by the destruction of the party of Hebert, and still more by that of Danton and his followers. He had, so to speak, scarped away the ground which he occupied, until he had scarce left himself standing-room; and, detested by honest men, he had alienated, by his successive cruelties, even the knaves who would otherwise have adhered to him for their own safety. All now looked on him with fear, and none dared hope at the hands of the Dictator a better boon than that which is promised to Outis, that he should be the last devoured,

It was at this period that Robespierre conceived the idea of reversing the profanities of Chaumette, Hebert, and the atheists, by professing a public belief in the existence of a Deity. This, he conceived, would at once be a sacrifice to public opinion, and, as he hoped to manage it, a new and potent spring, to be moved by his own finger. In a word, he seems to have designed to unite, with his power in the state, the character of High Pontiff of the new faith.

As the organ of the Committee of Public Safety, Robespierre, by a speech of great length, and extremely dull, undertook the conversion of the French nation from infidelity. Upon all such occasions he had recourse to that gross flattery, which was his great, rarely-failing, and almost sole receipt for popularity. He began by assuring them, that, in her lights, and the progress of her improvement, France had preceded the rest of Europe by a mark of at least two thousand years; and that, existing among the ordinary nations of the world, she appeared to belong to another race of beings. Still he thought some belief in a Deity would do her no harm. Then he was again hurried away by his eloquence, of which we cannot help giving a literal specimen, to show at how little expense of sense, taste, or talent, a man may be held an excellent orator, and become dictator of a great nation: —

“Yes, the delicious land which we inhabit, and which Nature caresses with so much predilection, is made to be the domain of liberty and of happiness; and that people, at once so open to feeling and to generous pride, are born for glory and for virtue. O my native country! if fortune had caused my birth in some region remote from thy shores, I would not the less have addressed constant prayers to Heaven in thy behalf, and would have wept over the recital of thy combats and thy virtues. My soul would have followed with restless ardour every change in this eventful Revolution — I would have envied the lot of thy natives — of thy representatives. But I am myself a native of France — I am myself a representative. Intoxicating rapture! — O sublime people, receive the sacrifice of my entire being! Happy is he who is born in the midst of thee! More happy he who can lay down his life for thy welfare!” *)

*) When we read such miserable stuff, and consider the crimes which such oratory occasioned, it reminds us of the opinion of a Mahomedan doctor, who assured Bruce that the Degial, or Antichrist, was to appear in the form of an ass, and that multitudes were to follow him to hell, attracted by the music of his braying.

Such was the language which this great demagogue held to the sublime people whose lives he disposed of at the rate of fifty per day, regular taskwork; and who were so well protected in person and property, that no man dared call his hat his own, or answer for ten minutes' space for the security of the head that wore it. Much there was, also, about the rashness of the worshippers of Reason, whose steps he accuses of being too premature in her cause — much about England and Mr Pitt, who, he says, fasted on account of the destruction of the Catholic religion in France, as they were mourning for Capet and his wife. But the summary of this extraordinary oration was a string of decrees, commencing with a declaration that the Republic of France acknowledged the existence of a Supreme Being, in the precise form in which the grand nation might have recognised the government of a co-ordinate state. The other decrees established the nature of the worship to be rendered to the Great Being whom these frail atoms had restored to his place in their thoughts; and this was to be expressed by dedicating a day in each decade to some peculiar and established Virtue, with hymns and processions in due honour of it, approaching as near to Paganism as could well be accomplished. The last decree appointed a fête to be given in honour of the Supreme

Being himself, as the nation might have celebrated by public rejoicings a pacification with some neighbouring power.

The speech was received with servile applause by the Convention. Couthon, with affected enthusiasm, demanded that not only the speech should be published in the usual form, by supplying each member with six copies, but that the plan should be translated into all languages, and dispersed through the universe.

The conducting of this heathen mummary, which was substituted for every external sign of rational devotion, was intrusted to the genius of the painter, David; and had it not been that the daring blasphemy of the purpose threw a chill upon the sense of ridicule, it was scarcely matched as a masquerade even by the memorable procession conducted by the notorious Orator of the Human Race. *) There was a general muster of all Paris, divided into bands of young women and matrons, and old men and youths, with

*) Poor Anacharsis Clootz. He had been expelled from the Jacobin Club as a Prussian, an ex-noble, and, what perhaps was not previously suspected, a person of fortune enough to be judged an aristocrat. His real offence was being a Hebertist, and he suffer-

oaken boughs and drawn swords, and all other emblems appertaining to their different ages. They were preceded by the representatives of the people, having their hands full of ears of corn, and spices, and fruits; while Robespierre, their president, clad in a sort of purple garment, moved apart and alone, and played the part of Sovereign Pontiff.

After marching up and down through the streets, to the sound of doggrel hymns, the procession drew up in the gardens of the Tuileries, before some fireworks which had been prepared, and Robespierre made a speech, entirely addressed to the bystanders, without a word either of prayer or invocation. His acknowledgment of a Divinity was, it seems, limited to a mere admission in point of fact, and involved no worship of the great Being, whose existence he at length condescended to own. He had no sooner made his offering, than fire was set to some figures dressed up to resemble Atheism, Ambition, Egotism, and other evil principles. The young men

ed accordingly with the leaders of that party. — This note was rather unnecessary; but Anacharsis Clootz was, in point of absurdity, one of the most inimitable personages in the Revolution.

then brandished their weapons, the old patted them on the head, the girls flung about their flowers, and the matrons flourished aloft their children, all as it had been set down in David's programme. And this scene of masking was to pass for the repentance of a great people turning themselves again to the Deity, whose worship they had forsaken, and whose being they had denied!

I will appeal — not to a sincere Christian — but to any philosopher forming such idea of the nature of the Deity, as even mere unassisted reason can attain to, whether there does not appear more impiety in Robespierre's mode of acknowledging the Divinity, than in Hebert's horrible avowal of direct Atheism?

The procession did not, in common phrase, *take* with the people; it produced no striking effect — awakened no deep feeling. By Catholics it was regarded with horror, by wise men of every or no principle as ridiculous; and there were politicians, who, under the disguise of this religious ceremony, pretended to detect further and deeper schemes of the dictator Robespierre. Even in the course of the procession, threats and murmurs had reached his ears, which the impatient resentment of the friends of Danton was unable to suppress; and he saw plainly that he

must again betake himself to the task of murder, and dispose of Tallien, Collot D'Herbois, and others as he had done successively of Hebert and Danton himself, or else his former victories would but lead to his final ruin.

Meanwhile the despot, whose looks made even the democrats of The Mountain tremble, when directed upon them, shrunk himself before the apprehended presence of a young female. Cecile Regnaud, a girl, and, as it would seem, unarmed, came to his house and demanded to see Robespierre. Her manner exciting some suspicion, she was seized upon by the body-guard of Jacobins, who day and night watched the den of the tyrant, amidst riot and blasphemie, while he endeavoured to sleep under the security of their neighbourhood. When the young woman was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, she would return no answer to the questions respecting her purpose, excepting that she wished to see "what a tyrant was like." She was condemned to the guillotine of course; and about sixty persons were executed as associates of a conspiracy, which was never proved, by deed or word, to have existed at all. The victims were drawn at hazard out of the prisons, where most of them had been confined for months previous to the arrest of Cecile Regnaud, on whose ac-

count they were represented as suffering. *) Many have thought the crime entirely imaginary, and only invented by Robespierre, to represent his person as endangered by the plots of the aristocracy, and attach to himself a part at least of the consequence, which Marat had acquired by the act of Charlotte Corday.

A few weeks brought on a sterner encounter than that of the supposed female assassin. The Terrorists were divided among themselves. The chosen and ancient bands of the 10th August, 2d September, 31st May, and other remarkable periods of the Revolution, continued attached to the Jacobins, and the majority of the Jacobin Club adhered to Robespierre; it was there his strength consisted. On the other hand, Tallien, Barras, Legendre, Fouché, and other of the

*) This unheard-of iniquity is stated in the report of the committee appointed to examine Robespierre's papers, of which Courtois was the reporter. It is rather a curious circumstance that, about the time of Cecile Regnaud's adventure, there appeared, at a masked ball at London, a character dressed like the spectre of Charlotte Corday, come, as she said, to seek Robespierre, and inflict on him the doom of Marat.

Mountain party, remembered Danton, and feared for a similar fate. The Convention at large were sure to embrace any course which promised to free them from their present thralldom.

The people themselves were beginning to be less passive. They no longer saw the train of victims pass daily to the guillotine, in the Place de la Revolution, with stupid wonder, or overwhelming fear, but, on the contrary, with the sullenness of manifest resentment, that waited but an opportunity to display itself. The citizens in the Rue St. Honoré shut up their shops at the hours when the fatal tumbrils passed to the scene of death, and that whole quarter of the city was covered with gloom.

These ominous feelings were observed, and the fatal engine was removed to a more obscure situation at the Barrier de la Trone, near the Faubourg Saint Antoine, to the inhabitants of which it was thought a daily spectacle of this nature must be an interesting relief from labour. But even the people of that turbulent suburb had lost some of their Republican zeal — the men's feelings were altered. They saw, indeed, blood stream in such quantities, that it was necessary to make an artificial conduit to carry it off; but they did not feel that they, or those belonging to them, received any advantages from the number of victims, daily immolated, as they were

assured, in their behalf. The constant effusion of blood, without plunder or license to give it zest, disgusted them, as it would have disgusted all but literal cannibals, to whose sustenance, indeed, the Revolutionary Tribunal would have contributed plentifully,

Robespierre saw all this increasing unpopularity with much anxiety. He plainly perceived that, strong as its impulse was, the stimulus of terror began to lose its effect on the popular mind; and he resolved to give it novelty, not by changing the character of his system, but by varying the mode of its application. Hitherto, men had only been executed for political crimes, although the circle had been so vaguely drawn, and capable of such extension when desired, that the law regarding suspected persons was alone capable of desolating a whole country. But if the penalty of death were to be inflicted for religious and moral delinquencies, as well as for crimes directed against the state, it would at once throw the ives of thousands at his disposal, upon whom he could have no ready hold on political motives, and might support, at the same time, his newly assumed character as a reformer of manners. He would also thus escape the disagreeable and embarrassing necessity, of drawing lines of distinction betwixt his own conduct and that of the old friends whom he found it convenient to

sacrifice. He could not say he was less a murderer than the rest of his associates, but he might safely plead more external decency of morals. His own manners had always been reserved and austere; and what a triumph would it have been, had the laws permitted him the benefit of slaying Danton, not under that political character which could hardly be distinguished from his own, but on account of the gross speculation and debauchery, which none could impute to the austere and incorruptible Robespierre.

His subordinate agents began already to point to a reformation of manners. Payan, who succeeded Hebert in the important station of Procureur to the Commune of the metropolis, had already adopted a very different line from his predecessor, whose style derived energy by printing at full length the foulest oaths, and most beastly expressions, used by the refuse of the people. Payan, on the contrary, in direct opposition to Pere Duchesne, is found gravely advising with the Commune of Paris, on a plan of preventing the exposing licentious prints and works to sale, to the evident danger of corrupting the rising generation.

There exists also a curious address from the Convention, which tends to evince a similar purpose in the framer, Robespierre. The guilt of profane swearing, and of introducing the

sacred name into ordinary speech, as an unmeaning and blasphemous expletive, is severely censured. The using indecent and vicious expressions in common discourse is also touched upon; but as this unbounded energy of speech had been so very lately one of the most accredited marks of a true Sans-Culotte, the legislators were compelled to qualify their censure by admitting, that, at the commencement of the Revolution, the vulgar mode of speaking had been generally adopted by patriots, in order to destroy the jargon employed by the privileged classes, and to *popularize*, as it was expressed, the general language of society. But these ends being effected, the speech of Republicans ought, it is said, to be simple, manly, and concise, but at the same time free from coarseness and violence.

From these indications, and the tenor of a decree to be hereafter quoted, it seems plain that Robespierre was about to affect a new character, not, perhaps, without the hope of finding a Puritanic party in France, as favourable to his ambitious views as that of the Independents was to Cromwell. He might then have added the word *virtue* to liberty and equality, which formed the national programme, and, doubtless, would have made it the pretext of committing addi-

tional crimes. The decree which we allude to was brought forward by the philanthropic Couthon, who, with his kindness of manner, rendered more impressive by a silver-toned voice, and an affectation of extreme gentleness, tendered a law, extending the powers of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and the penalty of death, not only to all sorts of persons who should in any manner of way neglect their duty to the Republic, or assist her enemies, but to the following additional classes: All who should have deceived the people, or their representatives — all who should have sought to inspire discouragement into good citizens, or to favour the undertakings of tyrants — all who should spread false news — all who should seek to lead astray the public opinion, and to prevent the instruction of the people, or to debauch manners, and corrupt the public conscience; or who should diminish the purity of revolutionary principles by counter-revolutionary works, etc. etc. etc.

It is evident, that compared with a law couched in terms so vague and general, so obscure and indefinite, the description of crimes concerning suspected persons was broad sunshine; that there was no Frenchman living who might not be brought within the danger of the decree, under

one or other of those sweeping clauses; that a loose or careless expression, or the repetition of an inaccurate article of news, might be founded on as corrupting the public conscience, or misleading the public opinion; in short, that the slightest indulgence in the most ordinary functions of speech might be brought under this comprehensive edict, and so cost the speaker his life.

The decree sounded like a death-knell in the ears of the Convention. All were made sensible that another decimation of the Legislative Body approached; and beheld with terror, that no provision was made in the proposed law for respecting the personal inviolability of the deputies, but that the obnoxious members of the Convention, without costing Robespierre even the formality of asking a decree from their complaisant brethren, might be transferred, like any ordinary individuals, to the butchery of the Revolutionary Tribunal, not only by the medium of either of the committees, but at the instance of the public prosecutor, or even of any of their own brethren of the Representative Body, who were acting under a commission. Ruamps, one of the deputies, exclaimed, in accents of despair, that if this decree were resolved upon, the friends

of liberty had no other course left than to blow their own brains out.

The law passed for the night, in spite of all opposition; but the terrified deputies returned to the attack next day. The measure was again brought into debate, and the question of privileges was evasively provided for. At a third sitting the theme was renewed; and, after much violence, the fatal decree was carried, without any of the clogs which had offended Robespierre, and he attained possession of the fatal weapon, such as he had originally forged it.

From this moment there was mortal though secret war betwixt Robespierre and the most distinguished members of the Assembly, particularly those who had sate with him on the celebrated Mountain, and shared all the atrocities of Jacobinism. Collot D'Herbois, the demolisher of Lyons, and regenerator of Ville Affranchie, threw his weight into the scale against his master; and several other members of both committees, which were Robespierre's own organs, began secretly to think on means of screening themselves from a power, which, like the huge Anaconda, enveloped in its coils, and than crushed and swallowed, whatever came in contact with it. The private progress of the schism cannot be

traced; but it is said that the Dictator found himself in a minority in the Committee of Public Safety, when he demanded the head of Fouché, whom he had accused as a Dantonist in the Convention and the Jacobin Club. It is certain he had not attended the meeting of the Committee for two or three weeks before his fall, leaving his interest there to be managed by Couthon and Saint Just.

Feeling himself thus placed in the lists against his ancient friends the Terrorists, the astucious tyrant endeavoured to acquire allies among the remains of the Girondists, who had been spared in contempt more than clemency, and permitted to hide themselves among the neutral party who occupied The Plain, and who gave generally their votes on the prudential system of adhering to the stronger side.

Finding little countenance from this timid and long-neglected part of the Legislative Body, Robespierre returned to his more steady supporters in the Jacobin Club. Here he retained his supremacy, and was heard with enthusiastic applause; while he intimated to them the defection of certain members of the legislature from the true revolutionary course; complained of the inactivity and lukewarmness of the Committees of Public

Safety and Public Security, and described himself as a persecuted patriot, almost the solitary supporter of the cause of his country, and exposed for that reason to the blows of a thousand assassins.

“All patriots,” exclaimed Couthon, “are brothers and friends! For my part, I invoke on myself the poniards destined against Robespierre.”

“So do we all!” exclaimed the meeting, unanimously.

Thus encouraged, Robespierre urged a purification of the Society, directing his accusations against Fouché and other members of The Mountain; and he received the encouragement he desired.

He next ascertained his strength among the Judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and his willing agents among the reformed Commune of Paris, which, after the fall of Hebert and Chaumette, he had taken care to occupy with his most devoted friends. But still he knew that, in the storm which was about to arise, these out-of-door demagogues were but a sort of tritons of the minnows, compared to Tallien, Fouché, Barras, Collot D’Herbois, Billaud Varennes, and

other deputies of distinguished powers, accustomed to make their voices heard and obeyed amid all the roar of revolutionary tempest. He measured and remeasured his force with theirs; and for more than six weeks avoided the combat, yet without making any overtures for reconciliation, in which, indeed, neither party would probably have trusted the other.

Meantime the Dictator's enemies had also their own ground on which they could engage advantageously in these skirmishes, which were to serve as preludes to the main and fatal conflict. Vadier, on the part of the Committee of Public Safety, laid before the Convention, in a tone of bitter satirical ridicule, the history of the mystical meetings and formation of a religious sect under Catherine Theot, whose pretensions have been already hinted at. No mention was indeed made of Robespierre, or of the countenance he was supposed to have given to these fanatical intriguers. But the fact of his having done so was well known; and the shafts of Vadier were aimed with such malignant dexterity, that while they seemed only directed against the mystics of whom he spoke, they galled to the quick the High Pontiff, who had so lately conducted the new and singular system of worship which his influence

had been employed to ingraft upon the genuine atheism natural to Jacobinism.

Robespierre felt he could not remain long in this situation — that there were no means of securing himself where he stood — that he must climb higher, or fall — and that every moment in which he supported insults and endured menaces without making his vengeance felt, brought with it a diminution of his power. He seems to have hesitated between combat and flight. Among his papers, according to the report of Courtois who examined them, was found an obscure intimation, that he had acquired a competent property, and entertained thoughts of retiring at the close of his horrible career, after the example of the celebrated Sylla. It was a letter from some unknown confident, unsigned and undated, containing the following singular passage: — “You must employ all your dexterity to escape from the scene on which you are now once more to appear, in order to leave it for ever. Your having attained the President’s chair will be but one step to the guillotine, through a rabble who will spit upon you as you pass, as they did upon Egalité. Since you have collected a treasure sufficient to maintain you for a long time, as well as those for whom you have made

provision, I will expect you with anxiety, that we may enjoy a hearty laugh together at the expense of a nation as credulous as it is greedy of novelty." If, however, he had really formed such a plan, which would not have been inconsistent with his base spirit, the means of accomplishing it were probably never perfected.

At length his fate urged him on to the encounter. Robespierre descended to the Convention, where he had of late but rarely appeared, like the far nobler Dictator of Rome; and in his case also, a band of senators was ready to poniard the tyrant on the spot, had they not been afraid of the popularity he was supposed to enjoy, and which they feared might render them instant victims to the revenge of the Jacobins. The speech which Robespierre addressed to the Convention was as menacing as the first distant rustle of the hurricane, and dark and lurid as the eclipse which announces its approach. Anxious murmurs had been heard among the populace who filled the tribunes, or crowded the entrances of the hall of the Convention, indicating that a second 31st of May (being the day on which the Jacobins proscribed the Girondists) was about to witness a similar operation.

The first theme of the gloomy orator was the

display of his own virtues and his services as a patriot, distinguishing as enemies to their country all whose opinions were contrary to his own. He then reviewed successively the various departments of the government, and loaded them in turn with censure and contempt. He declaimed against the supineness of the Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, as if the guillotine had never been in exercise; and he accused the Committee of Finance of having *counter-revolutionized* the revenues of the Republic. He enlarged with no less bitterness on withdrawing the artillery-men (always violent Jacobins) from Paris, and on the mode of management adopted in the conquered countries of Belgium. It seemed as if he wished to collect within the same lists all the functionaries of the state, and in the same breath to utter defiance to them all.

The usual honorary motion was made to print the discourse; but then the storm of opposition broke forth, and many speakers vociferously demanded, that before so far adopting the grave inculpations which it contained, the discourse should be referred to the two Committees. Robespierre, in his turn, exclaimed, that this was subjecting his speech to the partial criticism and revision of the very parties whom he had accused.

Exculpations and defences were heard on all sides against the charges which had been thus sweepingly brought forward ; and there were many deputies who complained in no obscure terms of individual tyranny , and of a conspiracy on foot to outlaw and murder such part of the Convention as might be disposed to offer resistance. Robespierre was but feebly supported, save by Saint Just, Couthon, and by his own brother. After a stormy debate, in which the Convention were alternately swayed by their fear and their hatred of Robespierre, the discourse was finally referred to the Committees, instead of being printed ; and the haughty and sullen Dictator saw, in the open slight thus put on his measures and opinions, the sure mark of his approaching fall.

He carried his complaints to the Jacobin Club, to repose, as he expressed it, his patriotic sorrows in their virtuous bosoms, where alone he hoped to find succour and sympathy. To this partial audience he renewed, in a tone of yet greater audacity, the complaints with which he had loaded every branch of the government, and the representative Body itself. He reminded those around him of various heroic eras, when their presence and their pikes had decided the votes of

the trembling deputies. He reminded them of their pristine actions of revolutionary vigour — asked them if they had forgot the road to the Convention, and concluded by pathetically assuring them, that if they forsook him, “he stood resigned to his fate; and they should behold with what courage he would drink the fatal hemlock.” The artist, David, caught him by the hand as he closed, exclaiming, in rapture at his elocution, “I will drink it with thee.”

The distinguished painter has been reproached, as having, on the subsequent day, declined the pledge which he seemed so eagerly to embrace. But there were many of his original opinion, at the time he expressed it so boldly; and had Robespierre possessed either military talents, or even decided courage, there was nothing to have prevented him from placing himself that very night at the head of a desperate insurrection of the Jacobins and their followers.

Payan, the successor of Hebert, actually proposed that the Jacobins should instantly march against the two Committees, which Robespierre charged with being the focus of the anti-revolutionary machinations, surprise their handful of guards, and stifle the evil with which the state was menaced, even in the very cradle. This

plan was deemed too hazardous to be adopted, although it was one of those sudden and master-strokes of policy which Machiavel would have recommended. The fire of the Jacobins spent itself in tumult and threatening, and in expelling from the bosom of their society Collot D'Herbois, Tallien, and about thirty other deputies of the Mountain party, whom they considered as specially leagued to effect the downfall of Robespierre, and whom they drove from their society with execrations and even blows.

Collot D'Herbois, thus outraged, went straight from the meeting of the Jacobins to the place where the Committee of Public Safety was still sitting in consultation on the report which they had to make to the Convention the next day upon the speech of Robespierre. Saint Just, one of their number, though warmly attached to the Dictator, had been intrusted by the Committee with the delicate task of drawing up that report. It was a step towards reconciliation; but the entrance of Collot D'Herbois, frantic with the insults he had received, broke off all hope of accommodation betwixt the friends of Danton and those of Robespierre. D'Herbois exhausted himself in threats against Saint Just, Couthon, and their master, Robespierre, and

they parted on terms of mortal and avowed enmity. Every exertion now was used by the associated conspirators against the power of Robespierre, to collect and combine against him the whole forces of the Convention, to alarm the deputies of The Plain with fears for themselves, and to awaken the rage of the Mountaineers, against whose throat the Dictator now waved the sword, which their short-sighted policy had placed in his hands. Lists of proscribed deputies were handed around, said to have been copied from the tablets of the Dictator : genuine or false, they obtained universal credit and currency ; and those whose names stood on the fatal scrolls, engaged themselves for protection in the league against their enemy. The opinion that his fall could not be delayed now became general.

This sentiment was so commonly entertained in Paris on the 9th Thermidor, or 27th July, that a herd of about eighty victims, who were in the act of being dragged to the guillotine, were nearly saved by means of it. The people, in a generous burst of compassion, began to gather in crowds, and interrupted the melancholy procession, as if the power which presided over these hideous exhibitions had already been deprived of energy. But the hour was not

come. The vile Henriot, commandant of the National Guards, came up with fresh forces, and on the day destined to be the last of his own life, proved the means of carrying to execution this crowd of unhappy and doubtless innocent persons.

On this eventful day Robespierre arrived in the Convention, and beheld The Mountain in close array and completely manned, while, as in the case of Catiline, the bench on which he himself was accustomed to sit, seemed purposely deserted. Saint Just, Couthon, Le Bas (his brother-in-law), and the younger Robespierre, were the only deputies of name who stood prepared to support him. But could he make an effectual struggle, he might depend upon the aid of the servile Barrere, a sort of Belial in the Convention, the meanest, yet not the least able, amongst those fallen spirits, who, with great adroitness and ingenuity, as well as wit and eloquence, caught opportunities as they arose, and was eminently dexterous in being always strong upon the strongest, and safe upon the safest side. There was a tolerably numerous party ready, in times so dangerous, to attach themselves to Barrere, as a leader who professed to guide them to safety if not to honour; and it was the existence

of this vacillating and uncertain body, whose ultimate motions could never be calculated upon, which rendered it impossible to presage with assurance the event of any debate in the Convention during this dangerous period.

Saint Just arose, in the name of the Committee of Public Safety, to make after his own manner, not theirs, a report on the discourse of Robespierre on the previous evening. He had begun a harangue in the tone of his patron, declaring that, were the tribune which he occupied the Tarpeian rock itself, he would not the less, placed as he stood there, discharge the duties of a patriot. — "I am about," he said, "to lift the veil." — "I tear it asunder," said Tallien, interrupting him. "The public interest is sacrificed by individuals, who come hither to speak exclusively in their own name, and conduct themselves as superior to the whole Convention." He forced Saint Just from the tribune, and a violent debate ensued.

Billaud Varennes called the attention of the Assembly to the sitting of the Jacobin Club on the preceding evening. He declared the military force of Paris was placed under the command of Henriot, a traitor and a parricide, who was ready to march the soldiers whom he command-

ed against the Convention. He denounced Robespierre himself as a second Catiline, artful as well as ambitious, whose system it had been to nurse jealousies and inflame dissensions in the Convention, so as to disunite parties, and even individuals, from each other, attack them in detail, and thus destroy those antagonists separately, upon whose combined and united strength he dared not have looked.

The Convention echoed with applause every violent expression of the orator, and when Robespierre sprung to the tribune, his voice was drowned by a general shout of "Down with the tyrant!" Tallien moved the denunciation of Robespierre, with the arrest of Henriot, his staff-officers, and of others connected with the meditated violence on the Convention. He had undertaken to lead the attack upon the tyrant, he said, and to poniard him in the Convention itself, if the members did not show courage enough to enforce the law against him. With these words he brandished an unsheathed poniard, as if about to make his purpose good. Robespierre still struggled hard to obtain audience, but the tribune was adjudged to Barrere; and the part taken against the fallen Dictator by that versatile and self-interested statesman, was the most ab-

solite sign that his overthrow was irrecoverable. Torrents of invective were now uttered from every quarter of the hall, against him whose single word was wont to hush it into silence.

The scene was dreadful; yet not without its use to those who may be disposed to look at it as an extraordinary crisis, in which human passions were brought so singularly into collision. While the vaults of the hall echoed with exclamations from those who had hitherto been the accomplices, the flatterers, the followers, at least the timid and overawed assentators to the dethroned demagogue — he himself, breathless, foaming, exhausted, like the hunter of classical antiquity when on the point of being overpowered and torn to pieces by his own hounds, tried in vain to raise those screech-owl notes, by which the Convention had formerly been terrified and put to silence. He appealed for a hearing from the President of the Assembly, to the various parties of which it was composed. Rejected by the Mountaineers, his former associates, who now headed the clamour against him, he applied to the Girondists, few and feeble as they were, and to the more numerous but equally helpless deputies of The Plain, with whom they sheltered. The former shook him from them with disgust,

the last with horror. It was in vain he reminded individuals that he had spared their lives, while at his mercy. This might have been applied to every member in the house; to every man in France; for who was it during two years that had lived on other terms than under Robespierre's permission? and deeply must he internally have regretted the clemency, as he might term it, which had left so many with ungashed throats to bay at him. But his agitated and repeated appeals were repulsed by some with indignation, by others with sullen, or embarrassed and timid silence.

A British historian must say, that even Robespierre ought to have been heard in his defence; and that such calmness would have done honour to the Convention, and dignified their final sentence of condemnation. As it was, they no doubt treated the guilty individual according to his deserts; but they fell short of that regularity and manly staidness of conduct which was due to themselves and to the law, and which would have given to the punishment of the demagogue the effect and weight of a solemn and deliberate sentence, in place of its seeming the result of the hasty and precipitate seizure of a temporary advantage.

Haste was, however, necessary, and must have appeared more so at such a crisis than perhaps it really was. Much must be pardoned to the terrors of the moment, the horrid character of the culprit, and the necessity of hurrying to a decisive conclusion. We have been told that his last audible words, contending against the exclamations of hundreds, and the bell which the President was ringing incessantly, and uttered in the highest tones which despair could give to a voice naturally shrill and discordant, dwelt long on the memory, and haunted the dreams, of many who heard him: — "President of assassins," he screamed, "for the last time I demand privilege of speech!" — After this exertion his breath became short and faint; and while he still uttered broken murmurs and hoarse ejaculations, the members of The Mountain called out, that the blood of Danton choked his voice.

The tumult was closed by a decree of arrest against Robespierre, his brother, Couthon, and Saint Just; Le Bas was included on his own motion, and indeed could scarce have escaped the fate of his brother-in-law, though his conduct then, and subsequently, showed more energy than that of the others. Couthon, hugging in

his bosom the spaniel upon which he was wont to exhaust the overflowing of his affected sensibility, appealed to his decrepitude, and asked whether, maimed of proportion and activity as he was, *he* could be suspected of nourishing plans of violence or ambition. — “Wretch,” said Legendre, “thou hast the strength of Hercules for the perpetration of crime.” Dumas, President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, with Henriot, Commandant of the National Guards, and other satellites of Robespierre, were included in the doom of arrest.

The officers of the Legislative Body were ordered to lay hands on Robespierre; but such was the terror of his name, that they hesitated for some time to obey; and the reluctance of their own immediate satellites afforded the Convention an indifferent omen of the respect which was likely to be paid without doors to their decree against this powerful demagogue. Subsequent events seemed for a while to confirm the apprehensions thus excited.

The Convention had declared their sitting permanent, and had taken all precautions for appealing for protection to the large mass of citizens, who, wearied out by the reign of Terror,

were desirous to close it at all hazards. They quickly had deputations from several of the neighbouring sections, declaring their adherence to the National Representatives, in whose defence they were arming, and (many undoubtedly prepared beforehand) were marching in all haste to the protection of the Convention. But they heard also the less pleasing tidings, that Henriot, having effected the dispersion of those citizens who had obstructed, as elsewhere mentioned, the execution of the eighty condemned persons, and consummated that final act of murder, was approaching the Tuileries, where they had held their sitting, with a numerous staff, and such of the Jacobinical forces as could hastily be collected.

Happily for the Convention, this commandant of the National Guards, on whose presence of mind and courage the fate of France perhaps for the moment depended, was as stupid and cowardly as he was brutally ferocious. He suffered himself, without resistance, to be arrested by a few gens d'armes, the immediate guards of the Convention, headed by two of its members, who behaved in the emergency with equal prudence and spirit.

But fortune, or the demon whom he had served, afforded Robespierre another chance for safety, perhaps even for empire; for moments which a man of self-possession might have employed for escape, one of desperate courage might have used for victory, which, considering the divided and extremely unsettled state of the capital, was likely to be gained by the boldest competitor.

The arrested deputies had been carried from one prison to another, all the jailors refusing to receive under their official charge Robespierre, and those who had aided him in supplying their dark habitations with such a tide of successive inhabitants. At length the prisoners were secured in the office of the Committee of Public Safety. But by this time all was in alarm amongst the Commune of Paris, where Fleuriot the Mayor, and Payan the successor of Hebert, convoked the civic body, dispatched municipal officers to raise the city and the Fauxbourgs in their name, and caused the tocsin to be rung. Payan speedily assembled a force sufficient to liberate Henriot, Robespierre, and the other arrested deputies, and to carry them to the Hotel-de-Ville, where about two thousand men were congregated, consisting chiefly of artillery-men, and of

insurgents from the suburb of Saint Antoine, who already expressed their resolution of marching against the Convention. But the selfish and cowardly character of Robespierre was unfit for such a crisis. He appeared altogether confounded and overwhelmed with what had passed and was passing around him; and not one of all the victims of the reign of Terror felt its disabling influence so completely as he, the Despot who had so long directed its sway. He had not, even though the means must have been in his power, the presence of mind to disperse money in considerable sums, which of itself would not have failed to insure the support of the revolutionary rabble.

Meantime the Convention continued to maintain the bold and commanding front which they had so suddenly and critically assumed. Upon learning the escape of the arrested deputies, and hearing of the insurrection at the Hotel-de-Ville, they instantly passed a decree outlawing Robespierre and his associates, inflicting a similar doom upon the Mayor of Paris, the Procureur and other members of the Commune, and charging twelve of their members, the boldest who could be selected, to proceed with the armed force to the execution of the sentence. The drums

of the National Guards now beat to arms in all the sections under authority of the Convention, while the tocsin continued to summon assistance with its iron voice to Robespierre and the civic magistrates. Everything appeared to threaten a violent catastrophe, until it was seen clearly that the public voice, and especially amongst the National Guards, was declaring itself generally against the Terrorists.

The Hotel-de-Ville was surrounded by about fifteen hundred men, and cannon turned upon the doors. The force of the assailants was weakest in point of number, but their leaders were men of spirit, and night concealed their inferiority of force.

The deputies commissioned for the purpose read the decree of the Assembly to those whom they found assembled in front of the city-hall, and they shrunk from the attempt of defending it, some joining the assailants, others laying down their arms and dispersing. Meantime the deserted group of Terrorists within conducted themselves like scorpions, which, when surrounded by a circle of fire, are said to turn their stings on each other, and on themselves. Mutual and ferocious upbraiding took place among these miser-

able men. "Wretch, were these the means you promised to furnish?" said Payan to Henriot, whom he found intoxicated and incapable of resolution or exertion; and seizing on him as he spoke, he precipitated the revolutionary general from a window. Henriot survived the fall only to drag himself into a drain, in which he was afterwards discovered and brought out to execution. The younger Robespierre threw himself from the window, but had not the good fortune to perish on the spot. It seemed as if even the melancholy fate of suicide, the last refuge of guilt and despair, was denied to men who had so long refused every species of mercy to their fellow-creatures. Le Bas alone had calmness enough to dispatch himself with a pistol-shot. Saint Just, after imploring his comrades to kill him, attempted his own life with an irresolute hand, and failed. Couthon lay beneath the table brandishing a knife, with which he repeatedly wounded his bosom, without daring to add force enough to reach his heart. Their chief, Robespierre, in an unsuccessful attempt to shoot himself, had only inflicted a horrible fracture on his underjaw.

In this situation they were found like wolves in their lair, foul with blood, mutilated, despairing, and yet not able to die. Robespierre lay on a table

in an anti-room, his head supported by a deal-box, and his hideous countenance half-hidden by a bloody and dirty cloth bound round the shattered chin. *)

The captives were carried in triumph to the Convention, who, without admitting them to the bar, ordered them, as outlaws, for instant execution. As the fatal cars passed to the guillotine, those who filled them, but especially Robespierre, were overwhelmed with execrations from the friends and relatives of victims whom he had sent on the same melancholy road. The nature of his previous wound, from which the cloth had never been removed till the executioner tore it off, added to the torture of the sufferer. The shattered jaw dropped, and the wretch yelled aloud, to the

*) It did not escape the minute observers of this scene, that he still held in his hand the bag which had contained the fatal pistol, and which was inscribed with the words *Au grand Monarque*, alluding to the sign, doubtless, of the gunsmith who sold the weapon, but singularly applicable to the high pretensions of the purchaser.

horror of the spectators. *) A masque taken from that dreadful head was long exhibited in different nations of Europe, and appalled the spectator by its ugliness, and the mixture of fiendish expression with that of bodily agony.

Thus fell Maximilian Robespierre, after having been the first person in the French Republic for nearly two years, during which time he governed it upon the principles of Nero or Caligula. His elevation to the situation which he held involved more contradictions than perhaps attach to any similar event in history. A low-born and low-minded tyrant was permitted to rule with the rod of the most frightful despotism a people, whose anxiety for liberty had shortly before rendered them unable to endure the rule of a humane and lawful sovereign. A dastardly coward arose to the command of one of the bravest nations in the world; and it was under the auspices of a man who dared scarce fire a pistol, that the greatest generals in France began their careers of conquest. He had neither eloquence nor imagination; but

*) The fate of no tyrant in story was so hideous at the conclusion, excepting perhaps that of Jugurtha.

substituted in their stead a miserable, affected, bombastic style, which, until other circumstances gave him consequence, drew on him general ridicule. Yet against so poor an orator, all the eloquence of the philosophical Girondists, all the terrible powers of his associate Danton, employed in a popular assembly, could not enable them to make an effectual resistance. It may seem trifling to mention, that in a nation where a good deal of prepossession is excited by amiable manners and beauty of external appearance, the person who ascended to the highest power was not only ill-looking, but singularly mean in person, awkward and constrained in his address, ignorant how to set about pleasing even when he most desired to give pleasure, and as tiresome nearly as he was odious and heartless.

To compensate all these deficiencies, Robespierre had but an insatiable ambition, founded on a vanity which made him think himself capable of filling the highest situation; and therefore gave him daring, when to dare is frequently to achieve. He mixed a false and overstrained, but rather fluent species of bombastic composition, with the grossest flattery to the lowest classes of the people; in consideration of which, they could not but receive as genuine the praises

which he always bestowed on himself. His prudent resolution to be satisfied with possessing the essence of power, without seeming to desire its rank and trappings, formed another art of cajoling the multitude. His watchful envy, his long-protracted but sure revenge, his craft, which to vulgar minds supplies the place of wisdom, were his only means of competing with his distinguished antagonists. And it seems to have been a merited punishment of the extravagances and abuses of the French Revolution, that it engaged the country in a state of anarchy which permitted a wretch such as we have described, to be for a long period master of her destiny. Blood was his element, like that of the other Terrorists, and he never fastened with so much pleasure on a new victim, as when he was at the same time an ancient associate. In an epitaph, of which the following couplet may serve as a translation, his life was represented as incompatible with the existence of the human race: —

“Here lies Robespierre — let no tear be shed:
Reader, if he had lived, thou hadst been dead.”

When the report of Robespierre's crimes was brought to the Convention, in which he is most justly charged with the intention of possessing

himself of the government, the inconsistent accusation is added, that he plotted to restore the Bourbons; in support of which it is alleged that a seal, bearing a fleur-de-lis, was found at the Hotel-de-Ville. Not even the crimes of Robespierre were thought sufficiently atrocious, without their being mingled with a tendency to Royalism !

With this celebrated demagogue the reign of Terror may be said to have terminated, although those by whose agency the tyrant fell were as much Terrorists as himself, being, indeed, the principal members of the very Committees of Public Safety and Public Security, who had been his colleagues in all the excesses of his revolutionary authority. Among the *Thermidoriens*, as the actors in Robespierre's downfall termed themselves, there were names almost as dreadful as that of the Dictator, for whome the ninth Thermidor proved the Ides of March. What could be hoped for from Collot D'Herbois, the butcher of the Lyonnois — what from Billaud Varennes — what from Barras, who had directed the executions at Marseilles after its ephemeral revolt — what from Tallien, whose arms were afterwards dyed double red, from finger-nails to elbow, in the blood of the unfortunate emigrant gentlemen

who were made prisoners at Quiberon? It seemed that only a new set of Septembrisers had succeeded, and that the same horrible principle would continue to be the moving spring of the government, under the direction of other chiefs indeed, but men who were scarce less familiar with its horrors, than was the departed tyrant.

Scott, Walter,

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